

# Desolate Era

## (莽荒纪)

### Book 31

### Starflow River

### I Eat Tomatoes

### (我吃西红柿)

#### Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller... than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 1: Terror Starsea

Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord instantly disappeared from the cave. Only then did the bald, black-robed youth slowly shake his head. “Although Redwater and Master had very similar Daos and both specialized in staff-arts, Redwater is just a bit too vicious and cruel. I don’t like him. In fact, he hadn’t even become a Daolord of the Fourth Step yet. Forget it. I’ll just wait for a while longer.”

Universe treasures possessed tremendous patience. They truly were eternal and undying, and so they were able and willing to wait extremely long periods of time before accepting a new master. They would rather go without than choose someone who wasn’t a perfect fit.

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Whoosh. Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord felt the world around them blur. Moments later, they found themselves within a dark, empty region of space.

“We’re out.” Both of them revealed looks of delight. They could now both sense the locations of their avatars.

“I can finally sense my avatar and my Primaltwin again.” Ning relaxed slightly. So long as he could sense them, he would be able to orient himself. Moments later, he frowned. “Why do I feel as though they are very, very far away?”

He was separated from his avatar by an incalculable amount of distance. He had previously travelled to Eastroad Territory, one of the border territories of the Endless Territories, and that was already very far away from Vastheaven Territory. However, compared to his current distance that was absolutely nothing.

“I can sense that the distance between myself and my avatar is greater than the size of the entire Endless Territories.” The distance was so great that his senses were rather foggy, but Ning was certain that the distance was definitely vaster than the Endless Territories themselves.

“We...” The Ninedust Sectlord’s face turned pale.

“Ninedust?” Ning looked at him.

“We are in the Terror Starsea.” The Ninedust Sectlord’s face was ugly to behold. “And we are very, very deep inside of it. Extremely deep.”

“Extremely deep?” Ning’s face turned pale as well. Deep inside the Terror Starsea? The Terror Starsea was the most dangerous place that they knew of. In size alone, the explored parts of it already surpassed the size of the Endless Territories! In addition, Ning had learned while in the ‘cave’ that the Terror Starsea was actually the battlefield of the Dawn War, with numerous Hegemon-level figures having died there. The place was filled with countless wards and dangers that were originally meant to kill Hegemons, making them incredibly dangerous.

“Are you sure we are deep inside the Terror Starsea?” Ning immediately asked. He quickly scanned his surroundings. They were in the dark emptiness of space, with a few glimmers of light off in the distance.

“I’m certain, because I’ve been to the border worlds near the Terror Starsea,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “I’ve travelled and adventured through its outer regions, and we are very, very far away from those outer regions. Based on the distance from my avatar... my best judgment is that we are more than half the size of the entire Endless Territories away from the outer regions. We’re definitely deep inside.”

Ning’s heart turned cold. The Terror Starsea was deadly even for Eternal Emperors, while even Hegemons would tread carefully here for fear of dying. Generally speaking, even the most powerful of Daolords wouldn’t dare to venture too deep inside this place. As for their current location? This place definitely qualified as not just deep, but ‘incredibly deep’.

The two stood there within the endless darkness of space, both rather nervous. It would be impossibly difficult to escape the Terror Starsea and go home.

“We still have hope.” The Ninedust Sectlord knew more about the Terror Starsea than Ning. He said seriously, “Darknorth, your sword-arts have transcended space itself. You can easily use it to tear open a dimensional

gate and escape incredibly far distances.”

“Yes.” Ning nodded. He could indeed slice open dimensional passageways, then travel tremendous distances through them. It wouldn’t be difficult for him to create a dimensional passageway that could traverse more than ten territories. This was far faster than even using spacetime transfer arrays!

In truth, it made sense. Given Ning’s current sword-arts, so long as he was able to lock onto an enemy he would be able to slay that enemy from over a territory away! Spacetime transfer arrays would normally be needed to merely traverse such a great distance, a testament to how terrifying and important the Dao was.

The Brightshore Kingdom’s Hegemon was another good example. He was able to easily appear anywhere within the Endless Territories, an ability that was far superior to Ning’s.

“The explored regions of the Terror Starsea are vaster than the Endless Territories themselves! Since we are only over halfway in, that means that some Hegemons or ancient Eternal Emperors might’ve been here before,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

“Would you be able to ask one of those ancient powers to come guide us out?” Ning asked.

“None of them would care about Daolords like us,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “At most they would give us a star map.”

“Agreed. At most, we’d get star maps.” Ning was worried as well. “We’d know what was around us, but we’d still have to face any danger on our own. The two of us would only be considered second-tier even amongst Daolords. To travel such a great distance and escape the Terror Starsea... even though my sword-art transcends space, it’ll be far too difficult.”

“Yes, yes it will.” The Ninedust Sectlord felt an enormous sense of pressure as well. He then muttered, “Why did the Universe treasure send us here?”

“You can’t blame him for that.” Ning shook his head. “The Dawn War

was carried out in the Terror Starsea; that cave we were in is probably located deep within the Terror Starsea as well. It might be somewhere right next to us, in fact. The treasure was only able to send us here. No matter what, we can't just give up and lay down to die. We have to fight our best. Right now, we should first acquire star maps. Perhaps a good star map will be able to guide us through a fairly safe path."

The Ninedust Sectlord laughed. "Right. Patriarch Vulturas, one of the oldest members of my race, probably came here once as well. He obviously was able to return. I'll send my avatar to find a star map first, while you should acquire one from the Dao Alliance. The Dao Alliance has the most complete star maps."

"Look over there!" The Ninedust Sectlord suddenly pointed off into the distance, a complicated look on his face. "I think I already know where we are in the Terror Starsea."

"What is it?" Ning followed the Ninedust Sectlord's finger with his gaze. Off in the distance, there was a circle of green light.

"Let's go over there," the Ninedust Sectlord said softly. "Darknorth, this part is up to you."

"Alright." Ning drew his Northbow sword, then with a flicker of sword-light created a dimensional passageway before them. The Ninedust Sectlord and Ning both entered the beautiful rainbow dimensional passageway.

They flew side-by-side through this different spatial continuum, advancing rapidly towards their target.

"Time to exit." The two flew out from the glowing dimensional passageway, having arrived at another patch of empty, blank dark space. They were already more than ten territories away from their previous location.

"Eh?" Ning stared forwards in astonishment. Up ahead was an enormous green whirlpool that was surrounded by layers of green light. The green light was filled with boundless vitality, and the rocks and boulders that flew close to it quickly turned white in color, then disappeared into

nothingness. Next to the green whirlpool there was a similarly sized black whirlpool which was devouring everything nearby it, sucking all stones, shattered corpses, and various items that flew nearby into itself.

A green whirlpool and a black whirlpool. The former was filled with life energy, but it sucked all the life from the surrounding area and destroyed it. The latter was filled with death energy and devoured everything around it.

The two seemed to be parts of a whole. Although they were diametrically different, neither interfered with the other at all.

“What are those?” Ning could hardly believe it. He could sense that they were still very far away, but the two whirlpools looked absolutely enormous. Ning’s best guess was that these two whirlpools were each roughly the size of a hundred territories.

“This is the one thing in the Terror Starsea which terrifies all six organizations... the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels,” the Ninedust Sectlord said softly. “Do you know? Long, long ago, the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels was smaller than a single territory.”

Ning’s face turned pale. “Are you saying that it is growing?”

“Yes. It is growing.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. “The Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels... the life wheel draws away all vital energy, while the death wheel devours and destroys all. They are stealing and devouring all the life and matter from the area around them, and as they do so they continuously grow larger and larger. The rate at which they are growing is only increasing. In the future, they will grow to encompass the entire Terror Starsea. In fact, they’ll swallow the entirety of the Endless Territories and destroy all within it. It is destined for the Endless Territories to be destroyed one day.”

“What?!” Ning could hardly believe it. The Endless Territories were doomed to destruction?

“When the six powers originally discovered the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels, they immediately began to panic. All three Hegemons sought to work together to destroy it.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head.

“Unfortunately, any attacks launched against it were all swallowed. The energy of the attacks just made it grow bigger. There was simply no way to harm it in the slightest.”

“The most supreme Emperor-class cultivators and a few of the most powerful Daolords all know of this.” The Ninedust Sectlord looked at Ning. “Given your power, I imagine the Dao Alliance would soon inform you of this.”

Ning stared at the distant Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels.

They’d continuously grow until the day they wiped out the Endless Territories?

“This is something which was naturally born from the endless primordial chaos. There is no way cultivators can possibly resist something like this,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “However, there’s no need for us to worry too much. Based on our current predictions, it’ll be more than a million chaos cycles before it starts to destroy the Endless Territories. As Daolords, if we fail our Daomerge we’ll definitely die within 108,000 chaos cycles. Let the Hegemons and Emperors deal with this problem.”

Ning stared at the distant Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels, still unable to believe what he was hearing. “The Endless Territories... are doomed to be destroyed?”

## Chapter 2: Travelling

Those two enormous whirlpools continued to slowly spin in the darkness of space, continuously absorbing and devouring all things around them.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Even the empty void of space around them was being continuously shattered and devoured as the power of chaos and all other prime essence ripples were drawn into the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels.

“Nothing can stop them at all?” Ji Ning stared at them, murmuring softly to himself.

“Yes. Nothing can stop them.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head.

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As Ning’s true body was staring, stunned, at the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels, his avatar in the incredibly distant Vastheaven Palace of the Endless Territories was off to visit Daolord Solesky.

Within a private courtyard. Daolord Solesky’s avatar was relaxing with some wine while staring at the darkened horizons.

“Big brother Solesky,” the golden-robed Ning called out.

“Ji Ning.” Solesky turned to look at him, then suddenly started to laugh. “This is rather diverting.”

“Why are you laughing, big brother?” The golden-robed Ning was rather surprised.

Solesky smiled. “I’m laughing because both of us are avatars! Two avatars are holding a meeting with each other... haha...”

The golden-robed Ning was briefly startled before letting out a chuckle as well. Both of their true bodies were outside, adventuring. Avatars were much weaker, but they’d be strong enough to stand guard over a school or clan.

“Ever since you created an avatar, you’ve been spending your time



strengthening it. Aside from the Kongsan matter, you haven't come to see me at all." Daolord Solesky asked, "Why is it that you've suddenly come to seek me out?"

"There is indeed something I need help with." The golden-robed Ning nodded. "I'm currently trapped in the Terror Starsea."

"Trapped in the Terror Starsea?" Daolord Solesky leapt to his feet, no longer relaxed in the slightest. He said solemnly, "Where in the Terror Starsea?"

"Close to the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels," Ning said.

Daolord Solesky's face immediately turned ugly to behold. "W-why the hell did you go there? Even I have only heard of that thing from an old friend of mine. Supposedly, they are the most terrifying things within the Terror Starsea. Even the almighty Hegemons are helpless against them; if they tried to charge into those wheels, they would instantly be obliterated by them! They are still continuing to slowly grow larger. Supposedly, in the distant future they might even sweep over the entire Terror Starsea, then devour all of the Endless Territories and wipe it out completely."

Ning nodded. "I have heard the same."

"But that's something that should only happen a long, long time for now. We probably won't live long enough to see that." Daolord Solesky said seriously, "The Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels are extremely deep within the Terror Starsea. Not even the most overwhelmingly powerful Daolords would dare to venture that deep. Why did you go there?"

"It wasn't my choice." Ning shook his head. "I had an unexpected encounter, resulting in me being transferred there."

"Transferred?" Daolord Solesky shook his head and sighed.

"Big brother Solesky, do you have a map of the Terror Starsea?" Ning asked.

"I do." Daolord Solesky nodded. "I reached the Verge long ago, and so I sought out every opportunity possible for succeeding in my Daomerge. As a result, I prepared star maps of the Terror Starsea for myself, and they

include the location of the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels. However, they are too far away. If you wish to exit the Terror Starsea, you'll have to traverse a distance equivalent to more than half of the Endless Territories."

"Wait a moment. I'll prepare a copy for you." Daolord Solesky waved his hand, sending his Immortal energy out and forming an enormous star map in the air. This star map was filled with many markings and pathways.

It took roughly the amount of time needed to prepare a kettle of tea before Daolord Solesky finished drawing the complete star map. By then, Ning had silently memorized it all.

"This star map of mine came from the Dao Alliance," Daolord Solesky said. "It won't be easy to find a more detailed one."

"This will be enough." Ning nodded, his heart heavy.

"Be careful." Daolord Solesky truly was worried. As he saw, Ning's chances of surviving this were quite slim.

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Deep within the Terror Starsea, close to the titanic Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels. Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the darkness of space, staring at the enormous representation of annihilation in front of them.

"I have a star map now," Ning said.

"My avatar has gone out to beg a meeting with Patriarch Vulturas. I trust I shall acquire a map of my own soon," the Ninedust Sectlord said. "Have you looked at that star map of yours yet? What do you think?"

"This is going to be very hard." Ning shook his head. "I've already taken a look at things. The 'safest' route will still require us to go through sixty-two dangerous zones. Given our current power, our chances of surviving will be less than ten percent."

"Sixty-two?" The Ninedust Sectlord frowned. "Darknorth, your sword-arts transcend space itself. We should be able to avoid many of those

dangerous regions, no?”

“I’ve already factored that into my considerations.” Ning said helplessly, “Without it, we would have to go through more than five hundred danger zones! That would be certain death.”

“Damn.” The Ninedust Sectlord stared at his surroundings. “How the hell did we end up this deep inside?”

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord really did feel rather aggrieved. They had been teleported all the way from the Eastroad Sect, only to find themselves incredibly deep inside the Terror Starsea.

“Ninedust, perhaps Emperor Vulturas will have a better path than the one I found,” Ning said. “My star map isn’t all that detailed.”

“Right. Wait for now. My avatar is now meeting with Patriarch Vulturas,” the Ninedust Sectlord said expectantly.

Ning waited as instructed. A short while later...

“Haha, I have the star map.” The Ninedust Sectlord suddenly began to chuckle merrily.

“And?” Ning looked at him.

“There’s hope after all.” The Ninedust Sectlord was extremely excited. He waved a finger, sending out his Immortal energy to form an enormous star map in the void of space. “This is the star map which Patriarch Vulturas bestowed upon me. He once exited the same cave we did, and he also came out in this general area. He was much more powerful than us, and so he was able to return home with ease. However, he made repeated trips back to hear in search of the cave again, and so he is actually very familiar with this region and this route.”

“The safest route for us to take is this one.” The Ninedust Sectlord pointed towards a newly created route on the map. “Other powerful Daolords would find this route a difficult one, but your power over space will allow us to take it.”

Ning stared at the star map of energy hanging in the air, an excited look

on his face.

“There are four danger zones in total. We must first pass through Dreamdust Way, then enter the Starflow River. After passing through the entire Starflow River, we’ll exit from this point. We will then traverse two fairly short danger zones... and then we’ll be out safely.” The Ninedust Sectlord said excitedly, “There are four danger zones in total. For three of them, we should be able to traverse them safely if we use the protective resources we have at our disposal. The only tougher part will be the Starflow River.”

Ning nodded. Both of them had multiple life-preserving resources. They might not have enough Dao-seals for traversing several dozen or several hundred danger zones, but three? Both felt quite confident in their chances.

“The Starflow River?” Ning said, worried, “We have to pass through the entire thing?”

“Yes.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. “That’s the only real obstacle before us. Based on my calculations, we’ll have to spend at least three hundred thousand years traversing it. The other places, all combined, will only require perhaps ten years. Most of our time will be spent going through the entire Starflow River.”

The Starflow River was an enormous area that was like an enormous river of stars flowing through the darkness of the void. To traverse it would take a very long period of time.

To them it wouldn’t be too dangerous, and both stood a good chance of making it out alive. However, they’d still be in there for quite some time. The more time passed, the more variables might appear and the more danger might arise. The entire Terror Starsea was the battlefield for the Dawn War, after all, and the Starflow River was part of it. It wouldn’t be that easy.

“For us, this truly is the safest route we can try.” Ning nodded. “The route I suggested earlier gave us less than a ten percent chance of surviving. This one, I’d say our chances are fifty-fifty.”

“Agreed.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded.

Fifty-fifty wasn’t bad at all. Given Ning’s ability to transcend space and the incredibly detailed map and route which Patriarch Vulturas had given them, they now stood a very good chance of surviving.

“Thank goodness Patriarch Vulturas has been here many times. Otherwise, there’s no way we could’ve possibly found such a safe route.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. “Time to go, Darknorth.”

“Let’s go. I hope both of us will make it back to the Endless Territories alive.” Ning looked at the Ninedust Sectlord.

“We’ll definitely make it back alive, together!” The Ninedust Sectlord added, “I just received the ancestor’s legacy. There’s no way I’m going to die before making it back.”

Ning and Ninedust shared a smile. Both of them understood that this would be a dangerous, life-and-death journey. “Let’s go.”

Ning and Ninedust both stood at the prow of the black vessel. Northbow sword in hand, Ning tore a black passageway with his sword-arts through the darkness of space. Swoosh! The vessel flew into the passageway, which shut behind them.

The two of them, homeward bound, had just embarked on an incredible journey.

# Chapter 3: Heartforce Eradicator

The two advanced carefully, with Ji Ning only opening the tunnels once they found a fairly safe starting point and stopping point. Every so often, they would have to rely on the black vessel to avoid a few special areas that couldn't be traversed.

Half a month went past.

Rumble... spacetime was distorted here. Space debris filled the region, and countless dangers lurked hidden. A black vessel was paused within this field of chaotic spacetime, enduring the chaotic waves of shattered space.

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both stared towards the front. Up ahead of them, right in the middle of that region of chaotic space, was a bluestone road that was ten million kilometers wide. For an extremely beautiful and peaceful road to suddenly appear within this region of dark, chaotic space... they could sense that this stone path had to be hiding some sort of hidden danger.

"The Dreamdust Way." The Ninedust Sectlord said heavily, "If we wish to go back, we need to go through four danger zones, with the most dangerous one being the Starflow River! It's so enormous that it'll take us roughly three hundred thousand years to traverse it. The second most dangerous location will be Dreamdust Way! The final two danger zones are in the outer reaches of the Terror Starsea. Given how strong we are, the danger level it will pose us should be fairly negligible."

Ning nodded. Dreamdust Way was located very deep within the Terror Starsea and was extremely dangerous!

"I hope we won't be so unlucky as to die here." The Ninedust Sectlord looked towards Ning. "Let's go."

"Mm." Ning nodded. Swoosh! The black vessel immediately flew towards that bluestone pathway.

Only by passing through Dreamdust Way would they be able to reach

the Starflow River. Although very dangerous, this was comparatively the 'safest' path for them to reach the Starflow River.

The Ninedust Sectlord held his longstaff at the ready, his eyes narrowed as he scanned his surroundings. Clearly, he was quite nervous. He said in a low voice, "Given our vessel's flying speed, we should be able to exit Dreamdust Way in roughly a month. One month. Just one month. We need to stay on our guard this entire month."

Ning wielded a Northbow sword in each of his two hands as he maintained a vigilant watch. He couldn't help but smirk. "Ninedust. You almost seem nervous."

"Can't blame me for being nervous. The slightest miscalculation in this pla-... careful!" The Ninedust Sectlord's face turned pale. An azure scaled beast had suddenly appeared off in the distance. This beast had a pair of armored wings and a pair of protruding golden eyes that seemed to contain a vast world within them. Whoooosh. The azure scaled beast blinked. Moments later, more than ten thousand of similar beasts appeared next to it. All of them let out shrill, ear-piercing screeches.

"Dreamdust lifeforms. Careful!" The Ninedust Sectlord was very nervous. "Only one of them is real. The rest are all illusory, but it can switch its true body with the illusory ones at will. It could be any of them."

Ning stood there at the prow of his vessel, watching as the thousands of beasts charged towards them. A cold light suddenly flashed through his eyes.

Whoosh! An invisible ripple swept out like a wave towards the thousands of azure beasts. One beast suddenly let out a low, agonized scream. Its body trembled, then its golden eyes quickly grew dim as it silently collapsed.

The other azure scaled beasts all completely vanished in an instant, leaving behind that single fallen corpse. Moments later, the corpse began to automatically separate into countless motes of azure light which then began to flow into the bluestone path in a very natural manner.

"It died?" The Ninedust Sectlord turned to look at Ning, rather amazed.

“Darknorth, w-what just happened? How did that Dreamdust creature suddenly die?”

Dreamdust lifeforms were terrifying creatures that were born from the unusual, unique Dreamdust Way environment. They were born with incredible skill over illusions, and were able to manifest many false bodies which they could ‘swap’ with their true bodies at will. Thus, battling against them was a very tiresome and troublesome task. Even if you were much more powerful than them, you might die to them if you weren’t careful.

“Heartforce,” Ning said.

“I knew it! I sensed it.” The Ninedust Sectlord was rather stunned. “You are a Heartforce Cultivator?” The Ninedust Sectlord had been keeping a careful vigil, wary of more Dreamdust lifeforms appearing. When he suddenly sensed that strange wave blast out, he naturally was able to calculate that it had most likely been heartforce! However, Ning had never before used heartforce techniques, and Heartforce Cultivators were incredibly rare.

“Haha. I told you earlier that the Hegemon of the Dao Alliance left something for me.” Ning smiled. “I became a true Heartforce Cultivator within that cave.”

“Haha...” The Ninedust Sectlord was overjoyed. “Splendid! My greatest worry with regards to Dreamdust Way was that we might actually be trapped by its illusions! That’s why we have to maintain constant vigilance... but I never imagined that you would’ve become a Heartforce Cultivator. Hahaha! To trap a powerful Heartforce Cultivator with illusions is no easy feat. I can finally relax a little bit and not be as nervous as I was earlier. Just keep an eye out on things.”

“Dreamdust lifeforms are skilled in more than just illusions; they can also create many false bodies and are strong in close combat,” Ning warned. “The legends say that the most powerful lifeforms here are comparable to Eternal Emperors in power. Even though I’ll be able to resist their illusions, I’m probably not going to be a match for them in



close combat.”

“Mm.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded.

“If push comes to shove, we’ll have to rely on our Dao-seals,” Ning said.

“No matter what, you being a Heartforce Cultivator means that we’ll have an easier time of it when dealing with illusions.” The Ninedust Sectlord said curiously, “What heartforce art did you use just now? It seemed quite incredible.”

“Heartforce Eradicator,” Ning replied. This was a heartforce art which Ning created himself after studying and modifying the heartforce legacy left behind by Daolord Featherdress. It was highly suited to him and also extremely powerful.

Daolord Featherdress was far more powerful than the current Palace Lord of the Heartforce Palace! Daolord Feather had been the number one Daolord of the Endless Territories in that era and had three supreme heartforce arts.

These arts were known as the [Heartforce Eradicator], [Dreamworld], and [Featherdress Soulthrall Song]. Daolord Featherdress had primarily relied on the [Featherdress Soulthrall Song] to become the number one Daolord of that era. The song mesmerized the soul, ensuring that even powerful Eternal Emperors would be caught by it if they weren’t careful. Even many of the most supreme of Daolords were unable to resist such a terrifying heartforce art.

Ji Ning, however, was different from Daolord Featherdress. Ning’s Dao was that of the Omega Sword Dao, an offensive Dao. Featherdress was more subtle and more guileful, and also extremely skilled in the musical arts. This was why Featherdress had been able to create the terrifying [Featherdress Soulthrall Song].

The two walked different paths and naturally had very different styles. Ning had learned just a tiny bit of the [Featherdress Soulthrall Song] and had barely managed to learn 20% of [Dreamworld], but he had mastered the extremely offensive [Heartforce Eradicator] art. He had then modified it to make it better suited to him, resulting in it becoming even more

powerful.

His heartforce lashed out like a sword, eradicating the opponent's soul and truesoul. It was an extremely dominating attack!

However, if his foe was able to endure the attack, this heartforce art would be very ineffective. In other words, it was an 'all-or-nothing' type of attack. Daolord Featherdress had been skilled in many areas and thus was much more dangerous. In the end, Ning simply hadn't been training for long enough. He primarily relied on the power of his Omega Sword Dao. For him to be able to master and then retrofit the [Heartforce Eradicator] was already quite incredible.

"The name makes it sound pretty wild and dominating." The Ninedust Sectlord said in a resigned fashion, "I had thought that the gifts the ancestor gave me would enable me to beat you. It seems I'm not a match for you anymore."

"You really aren't a match for me now." Ning nodded.

"You little..." The Ninedust Sectlord glared at him. "You don't know the meaning of 'modesty' at all. Just you wait. When I become a Daolord of the Fourth Step... hmph! I've already gained many insights during our time in the cave. It won't take me too long to break through and become a Daolord of the Fourth Step. By then, you'll know just how awesome I am."

"It's quite normal to be stuck at a bottleneck for several chaos cycles. Don't worry, I won't abuse you too much in the interim," Ning teased.

The two bantered back and forth as they advanced on the black vessel. The reason why they were able to relax and banter was because they knew that illusions, at least, would not be a problem! Their only worry would be head-on encounters.

"Outsiders." An azure beast appeared in the distance, its golden eyes filled with a murderous look. "Die." Instantly, more than ten thousand duplicates of it appeared, with all of them charging towards the vessel. Neither Ning nor the Ninedust Sectlord could recognize the real one, as every single body could theoretically be the real one.

“Hmph.” Ning turned and swept his gaze across the beasts, his heartforce surging out like a wave. Instantly, all of the beasts vanished save for a single one that fell down dead. The corpse naturally dissipated and merged back into the bluestone road.

“Impressive, impressive. You looked at it and it died! I’m really jealous now.” The Ninedust Sectlord chortled in praise. “I wonder when and if I’ll ever become a Heartforce Cultivator. I’ll stare at people until they die! What a wonderful life that would be.”

# Chapter 4: Heartworld Projection, Descend!

This was the most frightening aspect of supreme Heartforce Cultivators! Their attacks were silent, fast, and incredibly deadly. Worse, not even Universe treasures were useful in defending against heartforce attacks. You could only rely on your Dao-heart, your soul, and your mental fortitude! There was no way to counterfeit any of these things. Even if you were incredibly strong in combat, if you had mental flaws then you would still die at the hands of a Heartforce Cultivator.

Long ago Ji Ning, Prince Greatjoy, Heartlord Solewind, and Waterlord Firesurge had journeyed to the Genesis Lands of the alternate universe. Together, they had tested themselves against the primessence chains that led to the heart of that universe. Although all four of them were very similar in power, Firesurge was noticeably much weaker than the others mentally.

This was why Heartforce Cultivators had very special statuses. Even when they were slightly weaker than others, they would still be afforded with the utmost of respect by even the most powerful of Daolords!

“Die, outsider!” Yet another azure scaled beast emerged. A second later, many thousands of illusions appeared around it. This was their standard, innate attack. But Ning just glanced at all of them, then swept out with his heartforce like a sword. Whoosh! They all dissipated like smoke as a single corpse fell down.

.....

The first twelve days in Dreamdust Way were extremely relaxed. Sometimes they encountered ten of those Dreamdust lifeforms at the same time, but in each case Ning was able to wipe them out with a single glance. None of them were able to resist Ning’s [Heartforce Eradicator] at all.

On the thirteenth day, they finally encountered a Dreamdust lifeform

that was capable of withstanding the [Heartforce Eradicator] and not perishing. This beast was noticeably larger than the previous ones that they had fought. Although it was able to survive the heartforce attack, it clearly was rather dazed by it, giving Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord a chance to charge forwards and slay it in close combat.

On the sixteenth day, they encountered an extremely tough-to-deal-with beast that was able to ignore the [Heartforce Eradicator]! It was also on the same general level of power as Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord in close combat. In the end the two had to join forces, with Ning finishing it off with a blow from his Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop.

The two continued to advance on their black vessel, but after the seventeenth day they begin to grow puzzled. “Odd. Why haven’t we seen a single Dreamdust lifeform?” Life had suddenly become quite tranquil, and they didn’t run into any of the beasts at all.

“This is odd. Extremely odd. According to Patriarch Vultur’s notes, Dreamdust Way should only grow in danger as we move deeper into it, with the Dreamdust lifeforms increasing in number and power.” The Ninedust Sectlord frowned. “It should take us roughly a month to traverse the entire Dreamdust Way. We should be at the very center of it right now. Why don’t we see as much as a single one?”

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The eighteenth day. The nineteenth day. The twentieth day...

Everything was very calm. No Dreamdust lifeforms appeared. Twenty-six days had gone by in the blink of an eye, and they were close to exiting Dreamdust way.

Whoooosh. The black vessel continued to advance at a hundred times the speed of light. Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stood alongside each other at the prow, staring off into the distance. Neither relaxed in the slightest. It had been ten days since they had encountered any Dreamdust lifeforms. Something was very wrong.

“Not good.” Ning’s face suddenly tightened.

“Stop!” the Ninedust Sectlord immediately called out.

The black vessel came to an immediate halt in the darkness of the void. The two of them stared off into the distance, where an entire host of azure scaled beasts had gathered. These creatures all had stooped figures, scaled wings, and protruding golden eyes. In front of them was the largest Dreamdust beast the two had seen thus far, a creature that was at least thirty meters tall. The beast at the very back was the smallest, merely fifteen meters tall.

“This looks like trouble.” The Ninedust Sectlord murmured, “Darknorth, the scaled beasts we saw previously were eighteen meters tall at best. This group is led by one that is thirty meters tall, and there are five beasts that are twenty-seven meters tall and twelve that are twenty-four meters tall. Even the weakest one is fifteen meters tall. In total, there are twenty-one of them.”

“Fifteen meters is the cutoff for surviving my [Heartforce Eradicator],” Ning sent mentally. “Clearly, the Dreamdust beasts have come prepared.”

The two sides stared at each other from afar. Off in the distance, more than a hundred more scaled beasts also stared at Ning’s group, their protruding golden eyes seeming to hold boundless worlds within them.

“Wonderful... absolutely beautiful...” The Ninedust Sectlord suddenly had a sappy, stupid grin on his face.

“Eh?” Ning’s face tightened. He immediately sent out a surge of heartforce smashing outwards like a ripple-wave that blocked all outside sources of power, allowing the Ninedust Sectlord to immediately regain his clarity of mind.

“I-I was actually trapped by an illusion.” The Ninedust Sectlord immediately came back to his senses, a cold thrill of fear going down his spine. He stared at the distant beast leader. “I was caught in an illusion without even realizing it. No wonder the Patriarch said Dreamdust Way was dangerous and that I might die here. He told me to be prepared at all times.”

“Prepared?” Ning glanced at him.

“Yes. My original plan was to engage in a continuous mental conversation with my retainers; whenever I stopped talking, that would be a sign that I had been trapped inside an illusion and my retainer would immediately use a Dao-seal to wake me up!” The Ninedust Sectlord continued, “But since I knew that you were a Heartforce Cultivator, I didn’t go through the trouble.”

Ning couldn’t help but nod upon hearing this. This wasn’t a bad idea at all.

“Cultivators...” An ancient voice rang out from afar. “I’m impressed that you were able to resist my illusions. No wonder you were able to slay so many of my compatriots with ease... but the end result of trespassing onto Dreamdust Way will still be death.”

The largest beast’s aura washed out like a tidal wave as it pointed at the two of them. “Kill.”

“Kill.”

“Kill.”

“Kill!” All of the Dreamdust lifeforms let out enraged howls as tens of thousands of illusions appeared around them. All of a sudden, there were over a million of the howling figures, and all of them charged straight towards the two.

“Use your secret art,” Ning sent mentally to the Ninedust Sectlord.

“Agreed.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded.

BOOM! Nine energy dragons immediately flooded out of Ning’s body. These were his nine novessence arts.

WHOOSH! Curtains of rippling water appeared around the Ninedust Sectlord that quickly surged off into the distance.

It took time for secret arts to attack. Generally speaking, even the most supreme of secret arts would still only be able to fly at a hundred times the speed of light. This was a major bottleneck for cultivators and attacks alike. There were many Eternal Emperors who were unable to breach this

limit.

The nine awesome secret arts and the waves of water swirled around each other, forming a perfect whole as they smashed towards the million-plus figures charging towards them.

BOOM!

Instantly, the many figures caught within the secret arts began to move much slower than before. However, all of them appeared completely unharmed. This was what made them so terrifying; there was no way to tell which one was real and which one was false.

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord's decision to join forces with their secret arts caused the fifteen meter beast and the eighteen meter beast to be completely locked in place, unable to move at all. The body of the fifteen meter beast actually began to shudder and slowly crumble apart. These two secret arts were simply too powerful. As for the other Dreamdust beasts, their speed dropped sharply as well.

"Die!" Ning focused his gaze upon them. Suddenly, an absolutely enormous world appeared in the void above the bluestone path. This world held tall mountains, deep canyons, and flowing rivers within it. At the very center of this world, there was an absolutely titanic mountain that was shaped like a giant sword. This enormous world was Ning's heartworld!

Ning's heartworld projection descended upon the bluestone road.

Heartworld projections were different from secret arts. Secret arts needed time to fly out and strike foes, but heartworld projections required no time at all. They were illusory projections and thus could descend instantly. Ning's heartworld was absolutely enormous, on the same level as that of Daolord Soleman's. His heartworld projection was thus just as powerful as his nine novessence arts.

When the nine novessence arts and the water curtain joined together, it had to be done in a careful way to prevent them from interfering with each other. The illusory heartworld projection, however, was able to overlap over them perfectly!



BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The fifteen meter beast was already at the verge of breaking apart, while the eighteen meter beasts had been completely frozen. Both were instantly annihilated when the heartworld projection came crashing down. The twenty-one meter beasts were now completely locked in place, while even the twenty-four meter beasts were dramatically slowed down.

“Let’s flee.” Ning immediately sent the black vessel fleeing at high speeds. There were simply too many of the remaining Dreamdust lifeforms, after all, and there was no way to tell which ones were real. There really was no way for them to kill the creatures.

“Damn. They are forcing me to use some of my own primal essence.” The beast leader had been at the front of its pack. Its tens of thousands of clones all vanished, leaving only it behind. It raised his head, letting out a bellow as a third eye suddenly appeared in its forehead. This was a completely azure light that glowed with blue light, and it stared directly at Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord.

Both of the cultivators immediately sensed that they were in mortal danger.

# Chapter 5: The Dreamdust Runes

Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were aboard the black vessel, seeking to flee out of the bluestone road. Their secret arts and the heartworld projection had crushed to death quite a few of the weaker beasts, causing the enraged beast leader to open his third eye in his forehead. When he did so, it seemed as though that eye had become the hegemon and ruler of this entire region of space.

A strange alien script appeared directly above that eye, formed by multiple divine runes. Seventy-two of those runes came together to form a single character.

“What type of script is this?” Ning was shocked upon seeing it. “I’ve never seen this script before.” But although it was his first time seeing it, Ning was still able to sense the unfathomable, limitless power which this script contained within it. It seemed as though the only thing comparable to this ancient script was the azureflower seal that was formed by the Nine Chaos Seals.

BOOM!

The entire vast bluestone road suddenly lit up with dazzling azure light that stretched up ten thousand meters, illuminating the entire region.

The nine secret arts, the Ripplewater secret art, and Ning’s heartworld projection were all suppressed by the power of the azure light. It also reached out to grip the fleeing black vessel, causing it to drop down from a hundred times the speed of light to merely sixty-two.

“The beast leader is going all out. It has activated the Dreamdust Eye!” The Ninedust Sectlord was shocked. “Darknorth, the Dreamdust Eye contains an extremely powerful illusory component. If you can’t withstand it, you need to tell me right away.”

“I can handle it.” Ning gritted his teeth, sending out his heartforce in ringed layers to defend against the invisible attack. While doing so, he carefully scrutinized the strange character which had appeared above the beast leader’s third eye.

He had the feeling that this character contained an absolutely terrifying level of power in the realm of illusions. It must be remembered that Heartforce Cultivators were incredibly strong in resisting illusions, far stronger than the majority of Eternal Emperors! For even Ning to find this Dreamdust Eye to be so hard to defend against meant that other Daolords, even ones as powerful as Palace Lord Dawnstar, wouldn't be able to fight it head-on. They would have to rely on special treasures in order to stay alive and have a chance to escape.

Eternal Emperors would die here as well if they weren't careful! Thankfully, Ning was a Heartforce Cultivator. This was why he dared to fight the attack head-on. One could imagine how terrifying this Dreamdust Eye attack was!

"I can sense that strange character is filled with boundless mysteries and illusions," Ning mused silently to himself. "If I could fully master it, I would be able to reach an even higher level of mastery over illusions."

Daolord Featherdress' greatest strength lay in those three mighty secret arts. Ning had only reached a high level of skill in one of them, the [Heartforce Eradicator]. Compared to other Heartforce Cultivators, he was fairly weak in illusions.

"Kill!" As the beast leader opened the Dreamdust Eye, it also transformed into a streak of light that charged straight towards them. Whoosh! It instantly moved at a hundred times the speed of light, while the black vessel was merely moving at sixty-two times the speed of light.

"It's chasing after us!" The Ninedust Sectlord was startled.

"At least its by itself." Only the beast leader was able to move at a hundred times the speed of light, with the twenty-seven meter beasts merely able to move at fifty times the speed of light.

Ning stood there at the prow of the ship, Northbow swords in hand. When he stabbed out with his sword, his right arm suddenly expanded to become a million kilometers in size as it pierced through the void. As for the Northbow sword, it expanded to become nearly ten million kilometers long, carrying an aura of overwhelming power as it stabbed towards the

attacking beast leader. Ning's sword was very strange; it seemed to carry an aura of overwhelming power, but it also contained some of the mysteries of the Shadowless stance, making it difficult for the opponent to grasp and predict it.

Boom! The beast leader let out a savage bellow as it lashed out with its sharp claws, sending them directly against the edge of the Northbow sword. A terrifying burst of power was sent through the Northbow sword towards Ning. Although Ning's marvelous sword-arts allowed him to divert a great deal of the power, the power remaining was still enough to cause his right arm to go numb. He couldn't help but stumble three steps backwards.

"How'd it go?" the Ninedust Sectlord asked, worried.

"It is too powerful. This thing is far stronger than me in close combat." Ning shook his head. If it hadn't been for the Hegemon armor, he probably would've been heavily injured just now. "It seems we'll be forced to use up one of our treasures."

As he spoke, Ning suddenly produced a golden medallion with his right hand. Daolord Kongsan had left behind a number of protective, life-preserving treasures when he died. Right now, Ning only had two remaining. This golden medallion had been crafted by an unknown Eternal Emperor. One crushed, it would form an enormous golden illusory mountain which would crash down upon the opponent. Ning felt certain that this should be enough to slow down the beast leader and ensure that they could flee.

"No need to waste a Dao-seal just yet," the Ninedust Sectlord said hurriedly. "We only have so many of them. We need to save them up as best we can."

"Do you have any better ideas?" Ning looked at him. It was indeed true that these Dao-seals were very rare and difficult to acquire. Daolord Kongsan had only gotten them over the course of countless years.

Right now, Ning had four life-preserving items left: Kongsan's two items, the Sword Hegemon's Dao-seal, and the spacetime disc the Brightshore

Hegemon had given him. That was it.

“Yes. I think I have a decent shot at this.” The Ninedust Sectlord stared intently off into the distance. “Once it gets a bit closer, I’ll make my move.”

“Oh?” Ning nodded and watched off to the side.

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The black vessel was surrounded by the nine novessence arts, the Ripplewater secret art, and the heartworld projection. All three combined were able to just barely ablate the pressuring power of the azure light, allowing the vessel to continue to advance at a speed of sixty-two speeds of light. As for the beast leader, it continued to chase after them and draw closer and closer at a hundred times the speed of light.

“Damn.”

“All of you shall die,” the beast leader bellowed as it closed in. It truly was a terrifyingly strong creature with stunningly fearsome illusions. The Dreamdust Domain it had just summoned was a full level higher and more profound than Ning’s novessence arts, and it was incredibly strong in close combat. It wouldn’t be easy at all for them to rely on their own power to survive this trip through Dreamdust Way. Most would have to rely on Dao-seals or other such treasures.

Whoosh. Whoosh. The distance between the two continued to narrow.

“This is the right moment!” The Ninedust Sectlord’s eyes lit up as he stretched out his right hand, a strange formation-diagram appearing in his palm.

BOOM! The formation-diagram within his palm instantly flew out and expanded dramatically, sweeping out towards the beast leader like the nets of heaven. The beast leader bellowed furiously, but was still completely enveloped by this enormous formation-diagram. The enormous formation-diagram was round inside but square outside, and it was composed of thousands of layers of strange formations that continuously merged into each other.

The beast leader was trapped within the formation. It let out continuous bellows as it furiously assaulted the formation, causing the entire formation-diagram to tremble and layers of formations to break apart, but new layers were quickly born out.

“It can’t break free.” The Ninedust Sectlord revealed a smug look. “If it wants to break through with raw power, it has to be able to destroy 3500 layers of formations at one go! Otherwise, the formations will be continuously regrown. Only when the energy within the formation is used up will it be able to escape.”

“How long will the formation-diagram last?” Ning asked.

“Probably for a short while.” The Ninedust Sectlord hesitated slightly. “This is my first time using it as well.”

Upon hearing this, Ning immediately sent the black vessel fleeing at full speed.

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The beast leader trapped within the formation let out furious roars as the two cultivators fled. The distance between them quickly began to grow greater and greater.

“We should’ve shaken him off by now.” Ning relaxed just slightly after flying for more than two hours. They had been flying at a hundred times the speed of light this entire time; there should be no way their foe could catch up.

“Ninedust, you said this was your first time using that formation-diagram?” Ning asked, “What made you so confident in its power? You also told me not to use my Dao-seals; didn’t the power come from a Dao-seal?”

“No, it came from a very special formation-diagram treasure.” The Ninedust Sectlord smiled as he waved his hand, producing a medallion above his palm that looked like a circle within a square. The medallion was covered with countless dense clusters of formations. “This formation-diagram treasure was bestowed upon me by the ancestor. All I need to do

to fully charge it is to fill it with the energy of ten million cubes of chaos jewels, which allows me to use it one time. When I activate it, even Eternal Emperors will be trapped for quite some time.”

Ning’s eyes immediately lit up when he heard this. “What a fine treasure! So you can activate it repeatedly?”

It could be used for the low cost of just ten million cubes of chaos jewels? Sure, that might sound like a lot, but the formation-diagrams it created could be used to trap Eternal Emperors!

“A Hegemon would be able to use it just relying on his own Immortal energy,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “Mine isn’t pure enough, so I have to rely on chaos jewels to make up the difference. It’ll take three days in order for those ten million cubes of chaos jewels to recharge the treasure. During the Dawn War, this treasure was considered an average one.”

Ning was secretly speechless. The Dawn War truly had been a terrifying one, and all the treasures that came from that time were truly wondrous. Dreamdust Way had been nothing more than an unremarkable relic-site during the Dawn War, but the beasts that it produced, especially the three-eyed leader which manifested that strange script, truly stunned and bedazzled Ning. No wonder so many generations of Daolords had dared to venture into this place to seek their fortunes, with even Eternal Emperors delving deep within.

“That script...” Ning had long ago fully memorized the strange character that had manifested above the third eye of the beast leader. He began to turn his attention to analyzing its mysteries.

Whoosh. The black vessel continued to fly at high speed. Three days later, it finally emerged from Dreamdust Way.

# Chapter 6: A Three Hundred Millenia Journey

After emerging from Dreamdust Way, it took them two more months of travel before they reached the most important phase of their journey through the Terror Starsea; the Starflow River.

“What an impressive sight.” Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stood at the prow of the black vessel, staring off into the vast and nigh-endless Starflow River. The place was filled with countless stars and planets of varying sizes, with some being negligible and others being even larger than the Solar Star of the Three Realms. All of the stars emitted absolutely identical auras of golden light, making the entire Starflow River look like an enormous world of flowing golden sand.

It was so vast that they couldn’t see any end to it. Supposedly, there had once been a major power who had been able to just barely make out the overall shape of the Starflow River, and it looked like the flows of a river. This was why it had been named the Starflow River.

“Starflow River is far larger than Dreamdust Way. In comparison, Dreamdust Way was nothing more than a short hallway.” The Ninedust Sectlord sighed. “We’ll be in there for three hundred millennia.”

“But it’ll be three hundred fairly safe millennia,” Ning said.

“If we’re lucky. Who knows, we might be able to ford the entire Starflow River with ease.” The Ninedust Sectlord was filled with hope as well.

Dreamdust Way was filled with danger at every turn, whereas Starflow River was comparatively much safer. The reason why the two viewed it as the primary source of danger on this trip was because they’d spend three hundred thousand years here. Even though it was ‘fairly safe’, all sorts of bad things could happen over the course of three hundred thousand years. If they were unlucky, they might stumble upon some truly dangerous creatures or places, and there were some places in Starflow River which were even more dangerous than Dreamdust Way.



However, if they were lucky it was also possible that they would avoid all danger and be able to sail through the river with ease.

It was guaranteed that Dreamdust Way would have an element of danger to it. Starflow River, however, was up to luck.

“Let’s go.” The black vessel flew straight into the awesome Starflow River.

Starflow River was filled with countless stars that emanated golden light. These countless stars were all linked together and resonated with each other, and their invisible power stretched out to cover all of Starflow River. This power was far superior to the power that filled Dreamdust Way. So long as this power was present, not even Ning’s sword-arts would allow him to tear through dimensions and teleport through it.

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Things proceeded more smoothly than they anticipated. Although the two encountered a few traces of ancient battle sites as they progressed through Starflow River and ran into a bit of trouble, they didn’t face any true danger at all. They didn’t even encounter anything capable of forcing the Ninedust Sectlord to use the formation-diagram in his palm. Just like that, nearly three hundred thousand years went past.

“Things have gone very smoothly. I estimate that in just a few dozen millennia, we’ll have traversed all of Starflow River.” The Ninedust Sectlord’s face was covered with excitement.

“Right.” Ning felt rather eager as well. He hadn’t exactly been wasting his time during the past three hundred thousand years. He had spent a good period of his time analyzing the mysteries held within the Dreamdust character and then used those insights into creating illusory arts for himself. The rest of the time, he spent on his Sword Dao!

By now, he had reached the third stage in three of his five sword-intents: the Blood Drop sword-intent, the Shadowless sword-intent, and the Yin-Yang sword-intent. As for the Soleheart sword-intent and the Heavenbreaker sword-intent, both of them were still lacking a bit. Clearly, to break through to become a Daolord of the Third Step would be rather

difficult.

As for illusions? The Dreamdust character was simply too profound. The Nine Chaos Seals had guided Ning into understanding and training in the azureflower seal, but the Dreamdust character was simply something of incredible power which had been left behind from the Dawn War. It wasn't an actual legacy! Ning was only able to learn as much as he could from it, and the power of his illusions increased several times over. Still, amongst other Heartforce Cultivators at his level he was still rather weak in this area! The difference, however, had been lessened.

"Eh? Darknorth, take a look." The Ninedust Sectlord pointed off into the distance.

Ning followed the Ninedust Sectlord's gaze, only to see signs of ruined buildings on a distant planet. "Looks like traces from the Dawn War."

"Let's go take a look," the Ninedust Sectlord said.

"Let's go." By now, the two were quite familiar with Starflow River. Ever since Ning had learned that the Terror Starsea had been the battlefield of the Dawn War, he had been able to divine how many of the ruins they encountered had been created. For example, Dreamdust Way. Their prediction was that it had been some sort of formation which had been left behind from the Dawn War, meant to trap enemies and make them fight at a severe disadvantage.

It must be remembered that Dreamdust Way had no one in control of it. The beast leader, acting independently, was already able to summon a terrifying amount of power from Dreamdust Way. If the person who had originally set it up was still alive and in control of it... what a horrifying thought! These two would probably have been almost instantly slain.

In truth, as soon as the two of them saw the humanoid creature and the two Hegemon corpses, they had realized that the Dawn War had been fought on a far greater scale than the two of them could even imagine.

Whoosh. The vessel flew towards the planet in question. As they moved closer, they were able to clearly see that there were indeed many shattered ruins on this planet. Everything here was in terrible shape, with nothing

more than a few stone pillars and battered walls remaining.

“My guess is that a major power must have hidden within his estate here, relying on its layers of barriers to stay alive. However, in the end even the estate was smashed into smithereens,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. The flying vessel landed on the planet, allowing Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord to fly out and inspect the stone pillars.

“There’s still a bit of power left in this estate.” Ning looked at the pillar in front of him. The towering pillar was thirty thousand meters tall, and its top was covered with layers of blurry white light. Even though countless years had gone by, the power of the pillar remained.

“It doesn’t seem as though there are any treasures here.” The Ninedust Sectlord walked around as he inspected the place. “Over the course of three hundred thousand years, we’ve run into quite a few ruins here in Starflow River but haven’t found so much as a single treasure.”

“These ruins don’t have much danger either. They were probably discovered and scoured long ago,” Ning said.

“Eh?” Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord simultaneously turned to stare off into the distance. A single figure suddenly emerged from a distant, half-shattered wall. The man had tousled hair, bare feet, and was garbed in tattered yellow robes.

“Gentlemen.” The barefoot yellow-robed man smiled as he walked towards them.

“Are you a cultivator, or...?” Ning was puzzled.

“I belong to the Starflow race. My name is Daolord Laya.” The yellow-robed man smiled.

“The Starflow race?” The Ninedust Sectlord smiled. “I heard long ago that Starflow River has a ‘Starflow’ race within it, but this is our first time actually encountering a Starflow cultivator despite having spent three hundred thousand years here.”

The yellow-robed man laughed. “The Starflow race has many branches that are located deep within Starflow River. Every branch is protected and

hidden by formations, making it difficult for outsiders to discover them. Only when we go out adventuring do we interact with the outside world.”

Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord knew a good amount regarding the Starflow race. Both Solesky’s map from the Dao Alliance as well as the map bestowed by Patriarch Vulturas had detailed, thorough notes regarding the Starflow race in the Starflow River. The Starflow race was a branch of cultivators that had drifted to this place from the Great Dark. They were scorned by the other six major powers, and so they elected to make Starflow River their homeland. They found survival difficult despite having been here for countless years, and they usually referred to themselves as members of the Starflow Race due to how long they had lived here.

It must be understood that quite a few cultivator groups had drifted in from the Great Dark. Most were very weak and unable to compete against the local powers. Only the Dark Kingdom possessed significant power, resulting in them becoming one of six major powers. This was also the reason why the Dao Alliance and the others were highly biased and negative towards the Dark Kingdom, resulting in many battles. Weaker races like the Starflow race were still discriminated against, but so long as they played nice and didn’t try to infiltrate the Endless Territories, the various local powers there were all fairly kind towards them.

The Starflow race treated the Endless Territories in a very friendly manner. They lived at the suffrage of the Dao Alliance; how would they dare to not be friendly? Thus, encountering a member of the Starflow race in Starflow River was a good thing, not a bad thing, as the Starflow race member would often provide assistance or guidance.

“Yes. This is our very first time encountering a member of your race, and we’re about to leave Starflow River.” Ning smiled. “If we ran into you earlier, we might’ve had a smoother journey.”

“The two of you are planning to leave Starflow River?” Daolord Laya was curious.

“Yes, we are leaving soon.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded.

“Starflow River holds many treasure sites within it. Have either of you entered one of them?” Daolord Laya asked.

“Treasure sites?” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. “Although we found a few ruins, we didn’t find any treasures.”

“Starflow River is too vast. You’ve spent three hundred millennia here, but you’ve only seen a tiny portion of Starflow River,” Daolord Laya said. “Members of the Starflow race have been in this place for countless eons, and our Daolords and even Eternal Emperors have continuously explored and adventured through it. I’m certain that I know far more about this place than the two of you.”

# Chapter 7: Thundersouth Palace

Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both nodded.

“Our race has successive generations worth of experience regarding some of the major ruins and relic sites within the Starflow River,” Daolord Laya said. “I was preparing to head to one of them. I’ve already reached the Verge, but actually succeeding in the Daomerge... I don’t feel confident at all. That’s why I’ve come out to adventure and to temper myself in the hopes that I can increase my Daomerge chances.”

“Daomerge...” The Ninedust Sectlord sighed. “The Daomerge is far too difficult.”

“Yes, far too difficult.” Ning shook his head. Whenever the topic of the Daomerge came up, any and every Daolord would feel a sense of pressure, especially the powerful ones.

Although it was also quite difficult to advance from the first step to the second, third, and fourth steps, with a single mistake resulting in failure, this process was comparatively far more secure! For example, once Ning mastered his second-stage Omega Sword Dao he became a Daolord of the Second Step. Once he mastered the third stage of his Omega Dao, he would be able to become a Daolord of the Third Step.

The Daomerge, however, was different! The Daomerge required one to perfectly integrate and fuse all of the insights you had ever gained into your Dao. Success or failure could only be truly determined during the Daomerge itself! There was no one who could say with certainty that he or she would ‘definitely’ succeed in the Daomerge. For example, Ning only needed to gain sufficient insights into the Dao as he advanced through each step, and his chances were virtually assured in this way. The Daomerge, however... he had no idea as to what his chances of success would be.

Daolord Windsource of the Badlands Territory had in the end failed in his attempts to merge the hundred channels of his Dao together. In the future, Ning would undergo a Daomerge of his Sword Dao as well. Even

someone as proud as Ning would only claim that he was sure he could become a Daolord of the Fourth Step. As for the Daomerge? Not even he felt confident in his chances.

“The more overwhelmingly powerful the Dao, the harder the Daomerge will be.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head and sighed. “I don’t know if I’ll be able to succeed in the future. If I chose a weaker Dao, things would’ve been much simpler for me.”

“Are you actually willing to walk the path of a weak Dao?” Ning rebutted. In his heart, however, Ning couldn’t help but sigh. His Omega Sword Dao would be even more difficult! It must be understood that people like Palace Lord Dawnstar and the Ninedust Sectlord had perfectly joined multiple Supreme Daos together; if they gained eternity, they would become Hegemons. Ning’s Omega Sword Dao was even more powerful than their Daos. If he became an Eternal Emperor, he would be more powerful than even the Hegemons, right?

But Ning had never even heard of anyone who was more powerful than the three Hegemons. It was quite apparent how difficult it would be for him to reach such heights! In the future, the difficulty of his Daomerge would vastly outstrip that of Dawnstar or Ninedust.

“Of course not! What’s the point? Even if I succeeded in the Daomerge for a weak Dao, the only thing awaiting me would be a fate of being hunted and killed by others.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head.

“Since the two of you are within Starflow River, it’s obvious that you are both extraordinary Daolords.” Daolord Laya nodded with praise. “I agree with both of you. As cultivators, we should always strive to be as strong as we can. Otherwise, even if we become weak Eternal Emperors we still wouldn’t have the power needed to protect our race.”

Clearly, all three of them shared the same feelings. They had all chosen the path of becoming extremely powerful Daolords.

“Besides, the higher a level of enlightenment you gain and the more profound your understanding of the Dao is, the better your Daomerge chances will be,” Daolord Laya said. “I’m preparing to head to an

extremely dangerous relic site known as Thundersouth Palace. In the Starflow River area, it ranks amongst the top ten ancient ruins and supposedly has legacies left behind by Hegemons. I wonder if the two of you would willing to accompany me on that trip?”

“Thundersouth Palace? Hegemon legacies?” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord exchanged a glance. Both of them were intrigued. What was the entire point of adventuring? It was to seek out precious sites and treasures, right? A palace left behind by a Hegemon would definitely be filled with extraordinary things.

“Is that really a good idea?” The Ninedust Sectlord said, “This place is a place which your race discovered over the course of countless years of exploring; I’m sure that it is a secret which shouldn’t be casually divulged to others. If you bring the two of us inside...”

“Don’t worry about that.” Daolord Laya laughed. “Amongst our race, the location and existence of this place is indeed a tightly-held secret. I’m already a Verge-level Daolord who is far stronger than many of my peers, which is why the Emperors of our race informed me of the exact location of Thundersouth Palace. However, our standard policy as a race has always been to provide assistance whenever possible to Daolords of the Endless Territories who venture into Starflow River. All I need to request is that the two of you promise never to divulge this secret.”

“If that’s the case...” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded.

“Then we’ll accompany you on this journey,” Ning concurred.

They had heard long ago that the members of the Starflow race had always been extremely friendly towards cultivators of the Endless Territories. If Ning or the Ninedust Sectlord really did become Eternal Emperors, they would immediately gain extremely high statuses within the Endless Territories. They would remember the ‘favor’ which the Starflow race had shown them on this day, and they would naturally take care of the Starflow race when appropriate.

“If we’re going to head there... then as always, let us all swear lifeblood oaths,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.



“Alright. We’ll swear the lifeblood oath right now. That way, we can all work together and challenge Thundersouth Palace with full confidence in each other.” Daolord Laya agreed.

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Now that lifeblood oaths had been sworn, both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord felt more confidence and faith in Daolord Laya. Even if he really had been plotting against them, now that the lifeblood oath was sworn he would immediately be devoured by it once he actually tried to take any action.

“Haha, I’ve never been so lucky before.” The Ninedust Sectlord laughed. “A random stroke of luck is delivering treasures into my hand.”

“It was destiny that led me to meet with the two of you, Darknorth, Ninedust.” Daolord Laya smiled. “Very, very few of our Verge-level Daolords go out adventuring to temper themselves. For the three of us to run into each other really is an incredible bit of karmic luck, or as I put it just now, ‘destiny’. In addition, our long-standing rules permit me to take you to certain ruins. No need to thank me, gentlemen. At most, I would ask you to remember this bit of kindness I’ve shown you today. If the two of you are able to gain eternity in the future, please help us out every so often.”

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both nodded. Their chances of actually gaining eternity were incredibly low; if they truly did succeed, then occasionally helping out the Starflow race would be a minor matter.

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Ning, the Ninedust Sectlord, and Daolord Laya rode the black vessel as it flew through Starflow River.

“Thundersouth Palace isn’t that far away. Given how fast this vessel moves, we should reach it in just over a century,” Daolord Laya said. “Thundersouth Palace is quite dangerous, but I’m very familiar with it. So long as the two of you follow me, I’m confident that we should be able to stay safe.”

“Don’t underestimate Darknorth and myself, brother Laya,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

“Yes, you might end up needing the two of us to save your behind, brother Laya.” Ning grinned.

“Oh? I look forward to seeing your abilities,” Daolord Laya said.

The Ninedust Sectlord suddenly asked, “Oh, right. Brother Laya, I heard that the Starflow race migrated here from the Great Dark?”

Ning glanced at Daolord Laya as well. Ning himself was also quite curious about this.

“Yes.” Daolord Laya nodded. “Quite a few people know this. Long, long ago our homeland, a place known as the Peacock Lotus Realmverse, suffered an unbelievably massive war. The entire Peacock Lotus Realmverse was completely obliterated, and we were forced to flee for our lives. We drifted for many years through the Great Dark, with the first-generation Daolords of the Peacock Lotus Realmverse eventually all dying. We spent nearly a million chaos cycles drifting through the Great Dark, after all.”

“As we moved through the Great Dark, our Eternal Emperors held members of our race within their estate-worlds, giving them a place to flourish and prosper. The Eternal Emperors spent nearly a million chaos cycles drifting before finally arriving at the Endless Territories. In the end, they chose Starflow River as the place where our race would set down roots once more. Virtually all of the members of my race are now born and live in Starflow River, with only the original Eternal Emperors having actually come from the Peacock Lotus Realmverse. As for us Daolords, we know nothing of that place at all,” Daolord Laya explained.

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were both rather stunned by this. Nearly a million chaos cycles of drifting? The Great Dark truly was far, far too vast! No wonder only Eternal Emperors would dare explore it. Such an incredibly long journey was enough to bring despair to almost any Daolord. However, even for Eternal Emperors a million chaos cycles of solitude was a terrifying prospect. Only Eternal Emperors such as

Mirrorsnow who had long ago grown completely bored of the Endless Territories after having explored most of it would elect to enter the Great Dark and seek out excitement there.”

“Since we have left our homeland, propagating and surviving has been quite difficult.” Daolord Laya sighed. “The Endless Territories is under threat of destruction by the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels. Supposedly, in the distant future even the Starflow River will be destroyed by it. When that happens, our race shall be forced to continue our wandering.”

“The Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels?” Both Ning and Ninedust sighed. Indeed, in the distant future it was almost guaranteed that all of the various organizations within the Endless Territories would be forced to go off wandering. But of course, if they didn’t succeed in their Daomerge then the two of them would never live to witness that day.

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The three continued to relax and chat as they advanced through Starflow River. More than a hundred years went past in the blink of an eye.

“Thundersouth Palace is directly ahead. My race has already set up wards to hide everything in the region. Once I connect to them, we’ll be able to see Thundersouth Palace.” Daolord Laya stood at the prow of the ship as he spoke to Ning and Ninedust.

# Chapter 8: The Thundersouth Guardian

Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both let out impressed sighs. The Starflow race truly was crafty; they had actually set up barrier wards to make it impossible for others to locate Thundersouth Palace. However, the two of them both understood this decision; any race or organization would choose to hide such a valuable resource.

Daolord Laya stood at the prow of the vessel. His Immortal energy flooded outwards, condensing into one mysterious rune after another. Soon, a total of nine runes had taken shape. They hung there in the void, emanating waves of blurry white light.

“Open.” Daolord Laya’s voice was cold and sharp. Whoosh! The nine ancient runes all flew towards the void in front of them, and a series of ripples appeared. A void door appeared in the center of the ripples, and through the door one could clearly make out an enormous space palace on the other side.

“Come, let us go in. This void door won’t stay open for long,” Daolord Laya said hurriedly.

“Let’s go.” The three of them transformed into streaks of light that flew towards the void door.

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After passing through the void door, the three were able to clearly see the enormous golden palace which hung in the empty space before them. The golden palace was extremely beautiful, and it was covered with innumerable sculptures and diagrams which made it look quite bewitching.

The palace had an an aura of strength, power, and nobility. Above the front gates hung two giant words – THUNDER SOUTH. These two words crackled with streaks of electricity, and the calligraphy was filled with a lofty spirit. The entire palace emanated an invisible aura of presence and might which was strong enough to cause Ning’s heart to shudder.

They hadn't even entered yet. Just by staring at it from afar, they already felt a sense of danger. This was a clear warning which the previous master of the Thundersouth Palace had left for future guests!

Daolord Laya smiled. "No need to worry, gentlemen."

Ning shook his head. "Just by looking at those two characters, I can tell that this should have been a Hegemon's palace. Even the weakest of traps left behind by someone on that level would be enough to wipe me out a million times over."

"So long as you avoid being too greedy, you won't encounter any mortal danger here," Daolord Laya said.

"Too greedy?" Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord exchanged a glance.

"Are you saying we aren't allowed to touch any of the treasures we see in there?" Ninedust frowned.

Daolord Laya explained, "Before I left our racial headquarters, the Eternal Emperors told me that there are two major dangers which would be awaiting me here. They told me that if I wasn't careful, I might die, but if I was able to survive them then even if I did encounter a few other problems, those problems definitely wouldn't be life-threatening. This is why I only know detailed information regarding the first two dangers, as the Emperors did not speak of the later dangers in detail. The main thing they said to me was that I would be fine, so long as I didn't get too greedy. I was puzzled by this as well; the entire point of me coming to this place was to find valuable treasures for myself. What would be the point if I couldn't take anything? But the Emperors simply said that I'd understand everything once I actually entered."

"So we'll understand everything once we enter?" Ning laughed. "Hah. Fine, then. If we knew everything before going in, then it wouldn't prove to be much of a challenge or a tempering experience."

"Agreed." Ninedust nodded as well. "Come, let us go inside."

Both of them trusted Daolord Laya completely... or to be precise, they trusted the lifeblood oath all three had sworn. Since they were all bound

by oaths, there was no way for Daolord Laya to lie or deceive to them regarding this place.

The palace gates were enormous. The three stepped through the gates, and as they did Ning couldn't help but raise his head to look up once more at the two words that hung above it, 'THUNDER SOUTH'. He could vaguely sense that it contained certain mysteries within it, but his path was that of the Sword Dao and not that of the Dao of Lightning.

The enormous palace held many rooms, hallways, and even gardens. It truly was graceful and refined... but every single part of it was brimming with that deep azure lightning. Countless tendrils of lightning crackled everywhere, and they were actually quite beautiful to behold.

After they stepped through the gates, they stared somberly towards the front. All of them could sense the power held within those flickers of lightning.

"That is Eternal lightning," Ning blurted out. Ning had encountered many different types of Dao lightning in his quest to master the [Novessence Thunder], but none of them gave him the sense of power and danger which the lightning tendrils before him did.

"There's actually Eternal lightning within this palace?" The Ninedust Sectlord blurted out, "Eternal lightning... I've never heard of it being naturally birthed from the primordial chaos."

"Supposedly, only an Eternal Emperor who has reached incredible heights in the Dao of Lightning is capable of creating a streak of Eternal lightning," Ning said seriously.

"Yes... and this is the first great danger." Daolord Laya said solemnly, "The lightning fills virtually every inch of this palace, and it is both sentient and intelligent."

"Sentient and intelligent?" Ning exclaimed with surprise, "Isn't Eternal lightning sentient to begin with?"

"Just watch for yourself." Daolord Laya grinned. Just a heartbeat later, the countless streams of lightning in front of them began to wriggle about

and gather together, transforming into an enormous lightning humanoid. Its entire body was composed of electricity, and it had a pair of deep azure eyes that stared down upon the three from their lofty heights.

It was Eternal lightning, filled with endless vitality and life energy.

“Greetings, milord Guardian,” Daolord Laya said respectfully.

“Master left me in charge of protecting this palace,” the lightning guardian said calmly. “I will strike you with three palms. If you juniors can survive all three palms, you’ll be granted entry. If you feel confident in your personal power, you can choose to accept my strikes individually.”

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Within the palace. Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord had their weapons at the ready. Daolord Laya said hurriedly, “According to what the Emperors of my race said, the lightning guardian is reinforced by the power of the entire Thundersouth Palace and is incredibly powerful! Each of his three palms is more powerful than the last. If you can’t take them, come hide behind me.”

“No need for that.” The Ninedust Sectlord hefted his longstaff.

“Let’s see just how tough the lightning guardian is.” Ning had two Northbow swords at the ready. He was a very proud man; how could he choose to hide behind another?

The lightning guardian said coldly, “The first palm.” His right hand struck out like an enormous fan, the lines on his fingertips easily visible as lightning crackled around his palm.

“I’ll go first!” The Ninedust Sectlord let out a loud roar as he struck out with his longstaff, an illusion of waves appearing around it. BOOM! The longstaff curved in an almost whip-like fashion as it collided against the giant fan-like palm. An enormous explosion could be heard as the lightning palm trembled slightly, then retracted.

“Not all that powerful,” the Ninedust Sectlord sent mentally to the others.

“Here comes the second palm.” The lightning guardian’s voice remained cold and flat as he struck out once more with his right arm. This time, it transformed to become a mountain in size as it crashed down towards the three of them.

Ning, the Ninedust Sectlord, and Daolord Laya simultaneously brandished their own weapons. Ning used swords, the Ninedust Sectlord used his longstaff, and Daolord Laya used a greataxe. All three sent their weapons straight towards the lightning guardian’s enormous palm.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The two forces collided with an enormous collision. The three of them had managed to endure this blow head on, but their bodies couldn’t help but tremble from the force of the collision. They quickly managed to stabilize themselves. The Ninedust Sectlord’s face was ashen, while Daolord Laya’s face had a solemn look on it. Only Ning was still fairly relaxed, as his Hegemon armor was able to whittle away the power of any blow until it had only 0.1% of its original force. In terms of defensive prowess, Ning was more skilled than Ninedust and Laya to begin with. Although his body trembled from the collision, the shockwave was very little to him and caused his divine body little harm.

“Even if it went up a full level in power, it would be useless against me.” Ning felt quite confident. The Hegemon armor truly was powerful. However, Ning also understood that this was also partially because he himself had become much stronger than before. When he had first entered the Azureflower Estate, he had nearly been knocked unconscious by a single blow. Back then, he was at a disadvantage even when battling against the likes of Patriarch Clearwind.

As for now? Ning was currently stronger than even Kongsan!

“An impressive fellow. Fast and furious.” The Ninedust Sectlord let out a growl. “Darknorth, use your secret arts.” As he spoke, waves of rippling water began to emanate from his body.

“Agreed.” Ning nodded. Although he was able to take these hits head-on, the Ninedust Sectlord didn’t have a suit of Hegemon armor, making it



rather tough for him. The nine novessence arts flew out of Ning's body in the form of nine energy dragons.

The Ripplewater art and the nine novessence arts merged together, spreading out throughout the palace.

The lightning guardian's mouth crooked upwards slightly, almost as though he was laughing. "Interesting. Your secret arts aren't bad at all... but I'll use the power of the entire Thundersouth Palace in my third strike. I hope you can survive it."

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The hallways, gardens, rooms, and surface of the entire palace began to light up with runic script. The runes all seemed to flow and congregate around the lightning guardian. "Get ready for the third palm!"

Whoosh! The lightning guardian's palm struck out like the firmament of heaven itself, enveloping the entire palace within it as he attacked the three. There was nowhere to run or hide from this strike.

"Can't take it head on. Hide behind me!" Daolord Laya barked mentally as he produced a golden bone in his hands.

"I only have one treasure left." The Ninedust Sectlord immediately dodged behind Daolord Laya. Clearly, he would've been forced to use his treasures if he wanted to take this attack head on. If Daolord Laya was going to use his, there was no point in Ninedust wasting one of his own treasures out of sheer pride.

# Chapter 9: The Second Danger

“Darknorth!” As the Ninedust Sectlord dodged behind Daolord Laya, he discovered to his amazement that Ji Ning wasn’t doing the same. He knew very well that Ning was roughly on the same level of power as him. If he didn’t dare to take it head-on, how was it that Darknorth did? But there was nothing he could do except worry; the final attack of the lightning guardian was already descending upon them.

BOOM! The enormous hand descended upon them like the firmament of heaven itself. This strike contained the full force the lightning guardian was capable of mustering, and it had been reinforced by the wards of the palace itself.

Rings of white light appeared around Daolord Laya and the Ninedust Sectlord, allowing them to endure and withstand the strike.

Whoosh. The lightning guardian withdrew his palm, then glanced at the three and smiled. “I didn’t expect that one of you would be able to endure my palm through his own power. It seems you have quite an impressive protective divine ability, young fellow. One more trial awaits you, set down by my master. I hope you all survive it.”

The lightning guardian took a single step, then dispersed into countless streaks of lightning that quickly scattered in each direction. No more was the path in front of them blocked off by any lightning at all.

“Impressive, Darknorth. You actually took it head-on.” The Ninedust Sectlord walked over to Ning.

“According to my racial records, only the most supreme of Daolords can endure such a blow head-on. I’m impressed, Darknorth.” Daolord Laya truly was amazed. The power of that strike was far beyond what ordinary Eternal Emperors were capable of; that was a full-power strike from the lightning guardian which was reinforced by the palace’s formations!

“Eh, I simply have a decent protective divine ability. My entire body is still numb from that strike, though. My legs are about to give out underneath me.” Ning’s legs really were wobbling, but he laughed. “If that

lightning giant launched multiple attacks against me, I wouldn't have been able to endure it."

"Just like that, I used up a boneséal which one of our Emperor's personally made for me." Daolord Laya laughed, "If there were multiple attacks, no number of boneséals would've been able to protect me."

Ning couldn't help but sigh in amazement as well. His divine body was close to but not quite on par with a low-grade Eternal weapon. He had mainly relied on his Hegemon armor to endure this hit. Alas, the treasures he needed to upgrade his protective divine ability were simply too rare and hard to find. He did acquire Dragonfish Ki, but he needed to find the rest as well. He needed to upgrade his divine body to make it on par with a middle-grade Eternal treasure as quickly as possible.

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Ning, Ninedust, and Daolord Laya followed the winding hallways of the palace. The Thundersouth Palace was extremely large and quite beautiful. Every so often, they would see a few flickers of Eternal lightning swimming about them, but those lightning streaks all kept a long distance away from them. Clearly, now that they had survived the first trial the Eternal lightning would no longer cause any trouble for them.

"Halt!" Daolord Laya suddenly called out.

"Eh?" Ning and Ninedust came to a halt. In front of them was a lake that emanated an aura of freezing energy, and a faint layer of cold mist could be seen on its surface. There was a crooked wooden bridge which passed through the entire lake.

"The wooden bridge up ahead is the second dangerous trial which we will face in Thundersouth Palace, and the last one which could be life-threatening to us," Daolord Laya said somberly. "This one is even more dangerous than the first one."

"More dangerous?" Ning and Ninedust were both startled. Ninedust couldn't help but frown. "You were already forced to use up an Emperor's boneséal to survive the first one. Now you are telling me that this one is worse?"

“Yes.” Daolord Laya said somberly, “Quite a few of the more powerful Daolords of my race have visited Thundersouth Palace in their time. Each was given a single boneséal, but nearly half still ended up perishing here! It must be understood that there are two dangerous areas here. If you use up the boneséal during the first danger, you’d definitely survive it... and so the ones who didn’t, all perished here.”

Ning and Ninedust felt their hearts clench. Nearly half of the Daolords had perished here?

“Still, I’m confident in my chances.” Daolord Laya smiled. “The Emperor said that I have better than a 70% chance of surviving. Don’t worry at all, gentlemen. I’ll go up there and give the wooden bridge a try. If I really am so unlucky as to die here, then you can simply leave. The invisibility formation my race set up is only directed outwards, not inwards.”

“Brother Laya, what is so dangerous about the wooden bridge?” Ning asked.

“Once you step onto the wooden bridge, you’ll be trapped within an illusory realm,” Daolord Laya said somberly. “A very terrifying one! If you allow yourself to be led astray and accidentally fall into the waters of the lake, then you’ll die without question.”

“I’m planning to use the illusions here to temper my Dao-heart. My chances of making it are extremely high; if I can strengthen my Dao-heart, it’ll be of help to me in my Daomerge in the future.” Daolord Laya had a resolute look in his eyes. He was preparing for the Daomerge. No matter what, he was determined to embark on this path.

“Illusions?” Ninedust blinked.

“A terrifying illusory realm?” Ning stared blankly at Daolord Laya. “And your chances of surviving it are roughly 70%?”

“...What’s with the strange looks on your faces?” Daolord Laya immediately said, “The Emperor felt that my chances were high, but there’s still a chance that I might fail. I can’t give up a chance like this to temper my Dao-heart. Don’t worry, so long as I can make it across safely, I’ll come back and help you across as well. Otherwise, the two of you

would fall into the lake.”

Ning and Ninedust blinked again.

“You hear that, Darknorth? The second trial consists of illusions.” Ninedust laughed.

“And to think that I was feeling really nervous just now. Jeeze.” Ning shook his head and chuckled as well.

“What’s with the two of you?” Daolord Laya was puzzled.

The Ninedust Sectlord began to roar with laughter. “Brother Lay, let me give you a formal introduction of our friend Daolord Darknorth.”

“A formal introduction? An introduction of what?” Daolord Laya still didn’t understand.

“Brother Darknorth is exceedingly skilled in sword-arts, but you know that already. He also trains as a Heartforce Cultivator and is an extremely accomplished one.” The Ninedust Sectlord said smugly, “Just now, you were talking about helping a powerful Heartforce Cultivator survive deadly illusions... hah! I laughed so hard my teeth nearly fell out.”

Daolord Laya stared blankly. “A Heartforce Cultivator?” Heartforce Cultivators were pitifully rare; the Brightshore Kingdom was one of the six great powers of the Endless Territories, but it still had less than ten of them, and this was after the almighty Brightshore Hegemon had scoured the Endless Territories for talented World-level experts! The Starflow race naturally had even fewer Heartforce Cultivators. They had more than ten powerful Verge-level Daolords in this era, but not a single Heartforce Cultivator!

“Brother Laya...” Ning chuckled as well. With a thought, he summoned his heartworld projection and brought it down upon the area around them.

“A heartworld projection? Darknorth, you...” Moments later, Daolord Laya started to laugh as well. “Haha, I really made a fool of myself just now, didn’t I? Illusions really are nothing to brother Darknorth. Even if the master of the Thundersouth Palace personally cast his illusions over him, I

suspect he still wouldn't be phased in the slightest."

Ning laughed. This really was the case. Only someone incredibly skilled in illusions would have a chance at affecting him; for example, an Eternal Emperor who was also a Heartforce Cultivator would be able to trap Ning within illusions. As for Hegemons who occasionally trained in illusions? Those illusions wouldn't be able to affect powerful Daolords who were Heartforce Cultivators.

But of course, Hegemons wouldn't need to go to that trouble. The almighty Brightshore Hegemon, for example, could use his mastery over spacetime to wipe out Ning with ease. But if he was to use illusions instead... Heartforce Cultivators really would have very little to fear. Ning's best guess was that the master of Thundersouth Palace had been primarily focused on the Dao of Lightning.

"Darknorth, I do have one request," Daolord Laya said.

"If there's anything you need, just let me know," Ning said.

"I want to borrow this opportunity to temper my Dao-heart. Supposedly, the illusions are very effective for that," Daolord Laya said. "If I'm in any danger, please lend me a hand and ensure that I don't fall into the lake."

"Easily done." Ning nodded.

Daolord Laya nodded back at him, then walked onto the wooden bridge. He came to an immediate halt after doing so, staying there for a full hour without moving at all.

Ning and Ninedust both waited patiently. Roughly one hour later, Daolord Laya's gaze turned clear. A serious expression on his face, he began to carefully advance. However, without even realizing it he began to walk towards the edges of the wooden bridge. He clearly was walking askew, but he himself didn't realize it. He walked closer and closer towards the lake and its white frozen mist, which seemed ready to reach out and swallow him alive.

"Careful." Ning reached out with his arm, expanding it by dozens of meters. As his arm reached through the illusions, they immediately began

to surge through it and attempted to ensorcell his mind. But it was like the waters of a well splashing against the well's stones; they had no effect at all. Ning was completely unmoved, and so he latched onto Daolord Laya by the back, then pulled him straight out.

Daolord Laya was stunned as he was pulled out of the wood bridge. "What's going on?" He was stunned and couldn't believe it. He turned to look at Ning. "My mind was clear. I had completely shaken off the effects of the illusions."

"Shaken off? If it wasn't for Darknorth, you would've walked straight into the lake by now," the Ninedust Sectlord snickered.

# Chapter 10: Ji Ning's Illusions

“How is this possible? I could clearly sense that I was quite awake. I wasn't...” Daolord Laya's voice slowly trailed off. Moments later, he let out a low sigh. “What a terrifying illusion. It actually was able to seep into my soul without me even realizing it. The things that I thought I saw were actually all illusory. My Dao-heart still isn't strong enough, allowing my soul and truesoul to be infiltrated without me knowing it.”

“Haha, it seems you are fairly weak. Let me show you what I have up my sleeves.” The Ninedust Sectlord laughed as he walked towards the floating wooden bridge. After taking two steps, he turned to look at Ji Ning. “Darknorth, if I also end up walking astray you need to grab me.”

“Of course.” Ning nodded.

“But of course, I'm convinced that my Dao-heart will render me invulnerable.” Ninedust briskly walked forwards and stepped onto the floating wooden bridge. As soon as he did so, he too suddenly came to a halt and stopped moving.

He stood there for over two hours without moving. “Hmph.” A hint of a smile appeared on the Ninedust Sectlord's face. “What a formidable illusion. However, in the end I was able to break it.” He began to walk forwards as well, but he actually began to turn and move straight towards the waters of the lake.

Ning was badly startled by his sudden movements. Fortunately, Ning had kept a close eye on him. Ning immediately stretched his arm out by dozens of meters, latching onto the Ninedust Sectlord's silver robes and grabbed him back.

“Why the hell did you grab me? I was perfectly fine.” The Ninedust Sectlord looked at Ning.

“Calm down and think it over again.” Ning didn't even try to explain.

“I'm sure I didn't...” The Ninedust Sectlord's voice trailed off as well. Clearly, he was just now slowly shaking off the effects of the illusion.



Moments later, an astonished look appeared on his face. “That was absolutely terrifying. I’ve never encountered an illusion like that. I was trapped by the illusion, and I really did shake its effects off, but... it continued to slowly seep into my soul and truesoul, affecting both.”

“Right.” The nearby Daolord Laya concurred, “This is different from ordinary illusions. It looks dangerous, but all that is just for the sake of allowing it to disguise its soul-seeping abilities.”

“Mm. You were able to last for an hour before having your soul infiltrated.” Ning then looked towards the Ninedust Sectlord. “Ninedust, you lasted for two hours before being infiltrated. It seems your Dao-heart is slightly tougher than brother Laya’s.”

“But still not strong enough.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. “I nearly died.”

“I nearly died as well.” Laya shivered with fear.

“Darknorth, I want to try it again. The way in which this illusion seeps into the soul and truesoul truly is an excellent way for one to temper one’s Dao-heart,” the Ninedust Sectlord said immediately. “I can’t give up a chance like this. Help keep an eye on me and make sure I don’t walk into the lake.”

“I wish to give it a try as well, Darknorth. Give me a hand.” Daolord Laya also wanted to rely on this opportunity to temper his Dao-heart.

They had a Heartforce Cultivator watching over them. What had they to fear? And so, the two of them both stepped onto the wooden bridge... and once again they eventually began to walk towards the water of the lake like idiots. In the end, Ning had to drag them back again and again.

“This illusion really is something special.” Ning himself walked onto the bridge, then sat down in the lotus position and allowed the illusions to invade his soul as he began to analyze them.

His heartforce was maintained and nurtured by the power of his absolutely enormous heartworld, one which was comparable to an entire territory in size. There was simply no way an illusion on this level could

shake such powerful heartforce, giving Ning the opportunity to closely study from it.

During the past three hundred millennia within the Starflow River area, Ning had often spent time analyzing Daolord Featherdress' [Dreamworld] technique while researching the Dreamdust runes he had encountered in Dreamdust Way. He was still fairly weak in the art of illusions compared to other Heartforce Cultivators at the same level of power, but he could still be considered a grandmaster in this area when compared to others. The illusory power of this wooden bridge was actually close to that of the [Dreamworld] technique, but of course it was far from being a match for the Dreamdust runes. The Dreamdust runes were comparable to Ning's azureflower seal in profundity, and the illusions of this wooden bridge were far from being a match for it, making it easier for Ning to analyze and study it.

With but a thought, Ning caused time to accelerate a hundred times faster than normal in the area around him. Given his current level of power, it was easy for him to use his heartworld projection to accelerate time around him.

In truth, many powerful Daolords were capable of this, including the likes of Daolord Solesky. Even a number of Immortals and Fiendgods in the Three Realms were capable of this; for example, the 'Bridge of Despair' in the Underworld Kingdom had this function. However, causing time to accelerate a hundred times faster than normal for himself was extremely difficult, simply because he was extremely powerful. Generally speaking, only a powerful Daolord could accelerate time by that much.

Time continued to flow on. After spending more than thirty years, the Ninedust Sectlord finally managed to completely traverse the wooden bridge. Daolord Laya actually took eight hundred years before accomplishing the same.

"I thought that we had already spent quite some time there. Who would've thought that Darknorth would spend even more time than us?" The Ninedust Sectlord stood at the other side of the bridge, waiting helplessly as he looked at Ning.

“Let’s just keep waiting,” Daolord Laya laughed. The reason why Ning was staying at the bridge for so long was because he was analyzing and researching its various illusions. It must be remembered that Ning had rescued Ninedust and Laya on multiple occasions already, and so the two of them now waited for him without complaint. In truth, for Daolords even a wait of ten thousand years was nothing.

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After nine thousand years had gone past, Ning finally rose to stand up on the bridge once more. “Interesting.” Ning revealed a smile. “The [Dreamworld], the Dreamdust runes, and the illusions of this bridge... in the end, it was the illusions of the bridge that helped me out the most.”

The [Dreamworld] really didn’t suit him very well at all, as it was primarily tailored for Daolord Featherdress’ rather soft and insidious approach. The Dreamdust runes were simply too profound, almost unfathomably so. The bridge illusions were close to the [Dreamworld] illusions in power, but had been created by the master of this palace, the Thundersouth Hegemon. Although the Thundersouth Hegemon’s strongest Dao lay in thunder and he wasn’t particularly skilled in illusions, he was still close to Daolord Featherdress in ability. More importantly, his style was closer to Ning’s own style.

“To use a powerful illusion to attract the enemy’s attention while catching them offguard and infiltrating their souls... and to lead them astray just as they are feeling confident about having defeated the illusions. What a nasty technique.” Ning laughed. “My own illusions have finally started to take shape, thanks to learning some of the tricks of the wooden bridge.”

“Since my illusionary arts have gradually taken form in the Starflow Realm, then let them be called... the [Dreamstar] arts.” Ning was quite pleased. Now that he had developed his [Dreamstar] illusions, they would be of great use to him in battle.

The [Heartforce Eradicator] was simply too brutish; either the opponent resisted it or died outright! If the opponent resisted it and was able to

maintain mental clarity against it, the [Heartforce Eradicator] would have no effect at all.

The [Dreamstar] art, however, was able to have a constant impact on the enemy in battle. So long as the enemy was slowed down or distracted even slightly, Ning would have the chance to gain victory.

“The [Dreamstar] still needs further perfecting. If I can learn a bit more from the Dreamdust runes, I might become a figure like Daolord Featherdress, capable of using heartforce abilities to become the most powerful Daolord of my generation.” Ning knew that he was still far off from this goal; his technique was weaker than even the [Dreamworld] technique, to say nothing of Daolord Featherdress’ most powerful technique, the [Featherdress Soulthrall Song].

“Darknorth, you finally stood up.” The Ninedust Sectlord called out to him from the far end of the bridge, “Hurry up. We wanted to go exploring this place years ago, since we know that there’s no more danger inside. The only thing waiting for us is fortune and treasure, but we decided to wait for you instead. Now that’s brotherhood for you, eh?”

“Sure, I guess.” Ning strode towards them atop the wooden bridge. “But I saved you and grabbed you back from the brink of death more than ten thousand times. Now that’s real brotherhood, am I right?”

“Yeah, but did you have to do it in a way where you kept on grabbing me by the neck?” the Ninedust Sectlord grouched.

“You sure are picky about how you want your life to be saved,” Ning said.

The nearby Daolord Laya watched as Ning and Ninedust bickered and jested. He knew that his relationship with Ning hadn’t reached such a level yet; the latter two had experienced multiple life-and-death experiences, after all.

The group departed the wooden bridge area. “Based on my race’s records, there shouldn’t be much danger left in the following area,” Daolord Laya said. “However, that’s only assuming we aren’t greedy, whatever that means.”

Whoosh. Suddenly, the tendrils of Eternal lightning off in the distance all began to gather together off in the distance. Soon, an enormous lightning giant was standing in front of them once more. The lightning guardian stared at them, then revealed a smile. "I didn't expect there would be a Heartforce Cultivator in your ranks. Excellent. Your name is Darknorth, yes?"

"Darknorth greets you, milord Guardian," Ning said respectfully.

"You were able to take my third strike head-on, and the illusions were unable to affect you as well. Mm. You are permitted to choose any one treasure from the Thundersouth Palace. Remember, you are only allowed to take one. As for the two of you, you aren't allowed to take any treasures at all," the lightning guardian said. "Remember, don't be greedy. Greed leads to death!"

Ning raised his eyebrows. So this was what 'don't be greedy' meant.

"Kid, before my master went off to take part in the great war, he left four of these palaces behind scattered throughout the Terror Starsea. If you can pass the trials of all four, a truly large fortune will await you." The lightning guardian smiled mysteriously, then dissipated into countless streaks of Eternal lightning that fled off into every direction.

Ning was stunned, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry. The four palaces were scattered throughout the Terror Starsea? Perhaps during the Dawn War, the Terror Starsea wasn't very dangerous yet, but it was now a place where even Hegemons wouldn't dare tread. How could he possibly go out and search for the other three palaces?

"You are actually only allowed to choose one treasure? The two of us aren't allowed to choose any?" The Ninedust Sectlord glared at Ning.

"Haha! Remember how you won some treasures in that cave, but I ended up with nothing at all?" Ning smirked. The Ancient ancestor had left nothing for him at all. "What comes around, goes around. This time, it's your turn to leave empty-handed."

# Chapter 11: The Stone Censer of Reunion

Ninedust chatted with Ji Ning as the two walked, while Daolord Laya just stared at Ning with a rather complex look on his face.

“What is it, Daolord Laya?” Ning suddenly became aware of Laya’s stares.

“Brother Darknorth, you probably do not yet understand what being given a chance to take a treasure away from Thundersouth Palace represents.” Daolord Laya hesitated a moment, a complex look on his face. “The Starflow race cares deeply about one particular treasure inside this place. If you were able to bring it out and then gift it to our race, we would be willing to pay you an enormous price for it.”

“The Starflow race would like to trade with me for it?” Ning was stunned. “Has no member of the Starflow Daolords been able to take any treasures away with them when they left?”

“There has.” Daolord Laya nodded. “Just one! Receiving the approval of the Eternal lightning is incredibly difficult. There were others in our history who were able to endure the three blows and also endure the illusions, but they still were not acknowledged.”

Only now did Ning understand that gaining the lightning giant’s approval was no simple task.

“Only a single member of our race was allowed to take a treasure away with him, and he chose a different one,” Daolord Laya said. “My race desperately desires a chance to acquire that particular treasure. If you are willing to garner it and trade it with us... don’t worry. I promise our race will pay almost any price. My avatar is in our headquarters right now, and I can complete the negotiations for you before you choose it and bring it out. You can choose where the trade will be transacted! Even if you wish to carry it out in the Endless Territories, we can make it happen.”

Ning was intrigued. It really did seem as though the Starflow race was in desperate desire of that treasure.

“What treasure is it?” Ning asked.

“The Stone Censer of Reunion,” Daolord Laya said.

“An incense burner?” Ning was rather puzzled.

“Can it be the legendary...” A stunned look was on the Ninedust Sectlord’s face.

Ning looked at the look on Ninedust’s face, then looked at the eager expression on Daolord Laya’s. He instantly started to grow curious about this Stone Censer of Reunion.

“Let me go take a look first. Before doing so... brother Laya, please do not tell your race about the fact that I have a chance to select a treasure.” Ning said calmy, “Once you do, it’s possible that one of your Eternal Emperors would suddenly charge to this place and lie in wait outside. That would be troublesome.”

“Don’t worry.” Daolord Laya nodded repeatedly.

“Mm.” Ning decided to first take a look and see just what made this Stone Censer of Reunion so special. If it was also extremely important to him, then he would probably immediately leave this place with it in tow.

It would take time for the Starflow race to travel here. There was no way to use spatial teleportation within the Starflow River; even Ning’s ability to transcend dimensions was unable to pierce through the local region, thanks to the omnipresent power of the Starflow River. It would take quite some time for any member of the Starflow race’s Eternal Emperors to get here.

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The three of them quickly arrived at a beautiful, crystalline pavilion. The walls of the pavilion were like white jade and semi-translucent, allowing them to be able to see through to the insides.

“How beautiful.” The three of them walked shoulder-to-shoulder through the pavilion. There were five prayer mats located on the ground, with a palm-sized incense burner located at the very center of the

pavilion. The incense burner was both white and black, and it faintly emanated an aura of white smoke that was visible to the naked eye. It wafted out to an area of roughly nine meters that perfectly covered the five prayer mats.

There were also a number of paintings hanging from the walls and unfurled on the tables. Other treasures were on the tables as well. There was a bracelet that was engraved with some sort of bird carving, a pair of scissors that gleamed with black light, a pearl that emanated a freezing aura, and more. In total, there were twelve treasures on the dais.

“So these paintings were made by the master of this palace?” Ning raised his head to look at the paintings. All of them were in the same style, and they naturally contained many of the mysteries of the Dao, primarily of the Dao of Lightning. And yet, they actually contained some elements of the Dao of the Sword as well. However, considering that Ning was the master of the Omega Sword Dao, he viewed this person’s Sword Dao as being rather ordinary, perhaps on par with Emperor Mirrorsnow’s.

There was also the Dao of Illusions, and the Dao of Painting infused into each artwork...

“Quite a few treasures here.” Ning’s attention had been focused on the incense burner in the center as soon as he had come in, but he was in no rush to inspect it. Instead, he first looked at the other twelve treasures on the table.

“An umbrella?” A strange golden metal umbrella lay in front of him. The tip of the umbrella was incredibly sharp. Ning reached out to touch it, filling it with his godsense to learn some of its secrets.

This magic treasure was known as the Golden Ambersky Umbrella. It could be used to attack, but when the umbrella was opened it could also serve as a defensive treasure. It also contained a world unto itself that would be unleashed once the umbrella was opened, making it a domain-type treasure as well. The Ambersky World would manifest in the surrounding area, suppressing the foe. The power of the Ambersky World alone was on par with Ning’s nine novessence arts.



It could be used for attack, defense, and suppression... and in suppression alone it was comparable to the nine novessence arts. It must be remembered that Ning was only able to master those nine arts due to a confluence of lucky factors, and in the end had succeeded only because he had learned an incredibly profound alchemy technique! And of course, given his Omega Sword Dao, once he reached the third step as a Daolord he would be able to unleash even greater power when using those nine novessence arts to execute his sword-arts. He would reach a level comparable to Daolord Allgod at that time.

Despite that... the value of the Golden Ambersky Umbrella was truly unfathomable. Ning was stunned by its worth. The twelve treasures of the Hegemon truly were extraordinary.

“And what’s this?” Ning reached out to touch the bracelet engraved with the carving of a flying beast. This was the Sparrow Formation Bracelet. It could be filled with Hegemon-level energy or chaos jewels, then activated to unleash a mighty Sparrow Formation that could trap foes. Hegemons might be able to burst through the formation through raw force, but any weaker foe would be trapped until the power of the formation was depleted. Ning’s eyes lit up. “This is quite similar to the formation-diagram Ninedust holds in the palm of his hands. It’s actually a multiple-usage formation treasure.”

Treasures like these were incredibly valuable. Even if you encountered the eight lords of the Sacred Cities or the likes of Patriarch Vulturas, you could use this treasure to trap them for a brief period of time, which you could then use to flee! Thus, treasures like this would virtually never be found for sale on the open market. Eternal Emperors cherished them very highly.

Only Hegemons would be willing to bequeath them to later generations. They truly were of incalculable value. “A fine treasure.” Ning was deeply intrigued, but he then looked at the next treasure, a black disc that glimmered with a spot of light that roved inside of it.

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Every single treasure Ning saw interested him greatly. These treasures were of limited use to Hegemons, but incredibly valuable to most Eternal Emperors. As for Daolords? They were simply unimaginable. For now, Ning was still the most intrigued by the Sparrow Formation Bracelet.

“Now, let me take a look at the Stone Censer of Reunion.” Ning turned his head to look at the palm-sized incense burner located at the very center of the room. He walked over, then casually sat down on one of the prayer mats. Once he did, he sensed a surge of icy energy emanate from the prayer mats and into his entire body, causing his soul to calm down significantly.

Ning wasn't too impressed by the effects of the prayer mat, as there were quite a few treasures with similar functions. But when the scent of the incense coming from the stone censer wafted into his nose...

Rumble...

The entire world turned silent. Ning's mind and soul emptied out in an almost prajna-like state of epiphany, and many of his thoughts and questions pertaining to the Dao of the Sword quickly began to flash through his mind. More and more visualizations came to mind as he saw through one bottleneck after another...

After an undeterminable period of time, Ning opened his eyes. Only then did he realize that he had sat here for two days and a full night.

“I actually was able to fully master the third stage of the Soleheart sword-intent.” Ning was shocked. “I've almost even finished mastering the new Heavenbreaker sword-intent.”

He had spent three hundred thousand years drifting through the Starflow Realm. His Yin-Yang sword-intent, his Blood Drop sword-intent, and his Shadowless sword-intent had all broken through to the third stage. Now, after just sitting down for two days and a night, he had gained a terrifying number of new insights and breakthroughs.

“This is actually a meditation-type treasure?” Ning stared at the palm-sized incense burner in disbelief. “Although the state it allows you to delve into isn't as incredible as the true prajna-state of epiphany, it's fairly close.

This treasure would allow me to enter a state of epiphany at all times?”

To cultivators, what mattered the most? Treasures were secondary; insight into the Dao was what truly mattered!

This was a treasure meant for meditating on the Dao. It was truly priceless. He'd never even heard of one of these things being available for sale. The only reason the Thundersouth Hegemon had left it behind was because he wasn't sure if he would survive the Dawn War, and so he had left this treasure behind.

The Ninedust Sectlord and Daolord Laya had been in no rush to sit down. They had instead simply watched Ning.

Daolord Laya said quite urgently, “Brother Darknorth, are you willing to choose this incense burner and trade it to the Starflow race?”

“Darknorth, if you are willing to trade it to us Ancient cultivators, we would similarly be willing to pay an incredible price for it,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

# Chapter 12: Daomerge

Daolord Laya and the Ninedust Sectlord both looked at Ji Ning. Ning just continued to sit there, but he reached out with his right hand to gently stroke the stone incense burner in front of him. This censer truly was quite odd; it had a white half and a black half, almost as though two different incense burners, one white and one black, had somehow been merged together. The black side felt as cold as ice, while the white side filled his palm with warmth. It was this strange union of these two marvelous properties that produced that faint white fragrance.

Whoosh. Ning filled his finger with his Immortal energy, beginning the process of binding the Stone Censer of Reunion to him.

“So that’s how it is.” Ning now understood. The Stone Censer of Reunion was able to produce a fragrant scent that would cause cultivators around it to enter a state of constant epiphany. However, the fragrance would eventually be used up... but so long as you could continue to pour more Immortal energy into it, more of the fragrance would continue to be generated. In addition, the amount of Immortal energy it consumed was fairly low. However, the amount of fragrance it produced was only enough for a single cultivator to constantly use.

“No wonder my two days of cultivation caused the surrounding mist to shrink from nine meters to merely six meters.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh. This was merely the fragrance which was remaining and unused that was stored within the stone censer.

“Darknorth, are you sure that you will choose this censer?” the Ninedust Sectlord asked.

“Of course I’m certain.” Ning nodded. “A Dao-cultivating treasure like this is incredibly rare and unquestionably priceless.”

“Darknorth...” the nearby Daolord Laya looked anxiously at Ning. “Are you willing to trade it to my Starflow race? The Ancient cultivators have extremely deep roots and won’t care that much about the Stone Censer of Reunion, and so the price that we are willing to pay will definitely exceed

that of the Ancient cultivators.”

“You haven’t even offered a price, but you are already claiming that your race will be able to offer more than mine?” The Ninedust Sectlord smirked.

“Gentlemen.” Ning shook his head. “For now, I have no intention of trading this away.”

Ninedust and Laya were both startled.

“It is extremely important to me as well. When the day comes that it is of no further use to me, I might be willing to trade it,” Ning said.

The Daomerge was incredibly difficult. The likes of Bertulu, Daolord Skyaxe, Ninedust, and Palace Lord Dawnstar had joined multiple Supreme Daos together; if they ever succeeded in the Daomerge, they would become Hegemons! However, Hegemons were incredibly rare. Ever since the Dawn War ended in the Terror Starsea, the Endless Territories had only had three Hegemons; no more, no less.

As for Ning and his Omega Sword Dao? It would be even more difficult for him! If he succeeded in his Daomerge, he would probably be even more powerful than a Hegemon... but were there any Eternal Emperors that were above the Hegemon level of power?

Thus far, at least, Ning had never discovered such a thing! In the alternate universe he had been in, the Hegemons were still the most powerful figures. Even the leader of the Church of Annihilation in that universe had once been inferior to the Paragon of Pills. It was only thanks to the enormous gains and good luck he had reaped in the Genesis Lands that he had skyrocketed in power to become the most powerful figure in that universe. However, the ‘Dao’ this superlative lord of the church had used to complete his Daomerge and gain eternity for himself was clearly not that powerful.

Thus far, Ning had already discovered the corpses of several Hegemons. He had never, however, discovered anyone above the Hegemon level!

Ning fully understood that if he wished to become an Eternal Emperor

who was superior to even Hegemons, his path would be an incredibly difficult one. To complete the Daomerge with his Omega Sword Dao was virtually impossible.

“In the past, I had no faith at all in my abilities to complete the Daomerge. In fact, I wouldn’t even have dared claim that I felt I had even the slightest chance.” Ning stared at the stone censer in his hand. “But now that I have this Dao-cultivating treasure, my chances of completing the Daomerge have been increased significantly.”

The Northbow swords were very important to him, but the Stone Censer of Reunion... it was even more important!

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Within the empty crystalline pavilion. The three Daolords all had many thoughts in their minds. Ning was filled with excitement, while Daolord Laya and the Ninedust Sectlord were filled with both regret and envy.

“Ninedust. Laya.” Ning looked at the two of them. “Have you told anyone else that I have acquired the Stone Censer of Reunion? If you have, my only option would be to leave this place immediately.”

“I have not.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. “I would never do such a thing. Although the stone censer is important, it isn’t something that we Ancient cultivators would stop at nothing to acquire. Our clan already has other similar Dao-cultivating treasures. Unfortunately, I won’t have a chance to use them for quite some time. When I become a Daolord of the Fourth Step, I might be able to return to the clan and borrow it for a chaos cycle at best.”

For major clans and organizations, Dao-cultivating treasures were at a level which could be described as paramount to the entire organization. If an extremely powerful Daolord was about to attempt the Daomerge, they might loan it out for a single chaos cycle at most. Both supreme Daolords and Eternal Emperors all had need of Dao-cultivating treasures, and so it would be up to the highest-level members of an organization or a race to decide who would be able to use it.

The decision would generally be based on how to improve the strength

of a race as a whole. However, these treasures would generally end up in the hands of Eternal Emperors, because Eternal Emperors were also able to slowly increase their level of strength. The Paragon of Pills herself was an example of an Eternal Emperor who managed to slowly train to the Hegemon level. In the alternate universe, another good example of an Eternal Emperor who slowly became more powerful was Emperor Maniseal; it was only after he became an Eternal Emperor that he slowly reached ever-greater heights in the Dao of Seals.

As for Daolords? Even if they were given Dao-cultivating treasures, the vast majority of them would still fail their Daomerge. In the end, Eternal Emperors made up the foundation of any race or clan! The only ones who didn't really care about Dao-cultivating treasures were Hegemons.

"Laya?" Ninedust glanced sideways at Daolord Laya. "The Starflow race is rather lacking compared to mine. I don't think they would necessarily have a Dao-cultivating treasure. I'll wager that they are in desperate need of one. He might've already leaked the information. Hell, one of their Eternal Emperors might be on the way right now."

"I did not." Daolord Laya immediately shook his head. "I'm not that type of person, brother Darknorth. Don't worry."

"Gentlemen." Ning looked at them. "Both of you know how tempting a target this Dao-cultivating treasure makes me. Once word spreads, I'll never know another day of peace; in fact, I might very well die. Thus... brother Ninedust and brother Laya, I'd like to ask the two of you to swear lifeblood oaths that you will never divulge the fact that I have a Dao-cultivating treasure in my possession. You can't even tell anyone about me having acquired a treasure from Thundersouth Palace. I know that insisting on you two swearing this lifeblood oath is a bit overbearing, but I hope you can understand the difficult straits I am in."

Ning continued somberly, "What I can promise is that here in Thundersouth Palace, the three of us will share the usage of this stone censer. Consider this a form of compensation from me to the two of you."

"Given how bluntly you've put it, Darknorth, how can I refuse?" The

Ninedust Sectlord immediately swore the oath.

“This fortune belongs to you, Darknorth. In the end, it was not meant to be for our Starflow race.” Daolord Laya shook his head, then swore a lifeblood oath as well.

In truth, both of them knew that if they didn’t swear the oath, Ning would probably immediately depart from this place and might even hide this Dao-cultivating treasure somewhere. No matter what, it would be extremely difficult for the Starflow race to ever acquire it.

“Thank you.” Ning let out a sigh of relief, then came to a decision. “This stone censer is now the most important treasure I possess, far more important than even my Northbow swords! I cannot risk it being lost. Since my main body could perish at any time while out adventuring... mm. Once I get back to the Endless Territories, I’ll leave it with my Primaltwin.”

The Primaltwin was permanently stationed in the Three Realms and did not go out adventuring. It was indeed far safer to leave it there. In addition, the Primaltwin had also established its own heartworld and was now incredibly powerful. For it to use the stone censer to train in the Dao was the same as the true body using it, as their souls and truesouls were inextricably linked.

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After this, the three of them began to take turns using the Stone Censer of Reunion. Every thousand years, they would alternate!

One special property of the stone censer was that there was no way to use it under the effects of accelerated time! Or, to be precise, the fragrance emitted by the censer was simply too mysterious and profound. If you used temporal acceleration, you would need the fragrance to also be increased at a much faster pace, but this would cause the power of the temporal acceleration treasure to be depleted at an enormous pace. Even if one merely tried to train at double speed, the amount of Immortal energy which would be used up would be more than one could bear.

“This Dao-cultivating treasure truly is special.” Ning and the others spent all their time slowly and honestly training in the Dao without using



any temporal acceleration treasures at all. Despite that, they still trained far more quickly than they normally did.

When you were stuck at a bottleneck, you would sometimes come to a complete halt no matter how much time you spent training. When you were in a praja-state, however, you would improve far more quickly, allowing you to quickly bypass many bottlenecks.

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A mere ten thousand years later. Daolord Laya had been seated in the lotus position on the prayer mat, but he suddenly rose to his feet. This puzzled both Ning and Ninedust.

“Laya, you haven’t completed your thousand year mark yet. Why have you halted?” Ning asked, puzzled.

“Even before coming to this palace, I had already reached my limit. Thanks to this Dao-cultivating treasure, my Dao has become even more perfect than before. I cannot find any way to improve it in the slightest. Given how perfect and complete it is, and given how my heart and my mind are in peak condition thanks to this Dao-cultivating treasure... I have decided to attempt my Daomerge here in Thundersouth Palace!” Daolord Laya said.

“Daomerge?” Both Ning and Ninedust were shocked. The Daomerge? This was the most terrifying tribulation which each and every Samsara Daolord would ever face.

“I’ve waited for far too long already. It is time for my Daomerge.” Daolord Laya’s voice was soft, but his eyes blazed with fiery eagerness. This would be the most dazzling moment in his long, long life.

# Chapter 13: The Flower of Eternity

“When will the Daomerge occur?” Ji Ning asked.

“Right now.” Daolord Laya looked at Ning. “Brother Darknorth, I would like to ask you to loan me the stone censer during the Daomerge process.”

“A minor matter.” Ning immediately nodded in acceptance.

Daolord Laya waved his hand, causing a triangular altar to appear right next to him. The altar had three black bones atop it, and in the center of the bones was a depression. Daolord Laya took out a jade bottle, unplugged the stopper, then poured out a stream of bright silver liquid that quickly flowed into the depression.

Daolord Laya then took one step forward, appearing above the altar. He then sat down in the lotus position at the very center of it.

“I spent quite a bit of effort in preparing this altar as well.” Daolord Laya smiled towards Ning and Ninedust. “Ninedust, I imagine that you Ancient cultivators have even better tools at your disposal.”

“Of course.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. “My race has a very suitable Daomerge location, and our Verge-level Daolords will generally return to our homelands for their Daomerge for that reason. Only if some sort of special situation prevents them from coming home would they ever attempt the Daomerge outside.”

“The Ancient cultivators really do live up to their reputation,” Daolord Laya said. “My race does not have the ability to create a special Daomerge location.” As he spoke, he glanced at Ning. “Brother Darknorth, I’d like to ask you to place the stone censer before the altar.”

“Alright.” With but a thought, Ning sent the censer over towards the triangular altar, roughly three meters away from Daolord Laya. This allowed Daolord Laya to be able to absorb and inhale the fragrance which emanated from it.

Daolord Laya waved his hand, causing a second palm-sized jade bottle to appear. After pulling out the stopper, he shook out a single round and

smooth pill that emanated faint golden light. What looked like serpents could be seen swimming within the golden light. He opened his mouth and immediately swallowed the pill into his stomach.

“A Nethercold Jadedrake pill? Oho! It seems the Starflow race’s resources are quite ample. Even I don’t have a single such pill,” the Ninedust Sectlord said with praise.

Thanks to having studied the [Seven Leafpill Chapters], Ning knew quite a bit regarding the various pills that could be used to assist in the Daomerge. Nethercold Jadedrake pills allowed one to completely calm and empty out one’s mind and heart, putting both into a state of inconceivable clarity. If used to engage in Numerancy or calculations, one’s mind would be able to move a thousand times faster than normally. The Daomerge was a process that wasn’t exactly short, but no Daolord would describe it as ‘long’. Thus, the faster they were able to engage in the various calculations they needed to engage in during the time allotted them, the better.

Nethercold Jadedrake pills were recorded within the [Seven Leafpill Chapters]. They were ranked eighth amongst the various types of Daomerge-assisting pills. But of course, there were only a total of twelve such pills even recorded down to begin with, and every single type of Daomerge-assisting pill was incredibly valuable. As for the top five, they truly were shockingly rare. The top five pills... even the Paragon of Pills herself had to use all the power and skill available to her to succeed at making the second through fifth pills, and the process wasn’t an easy one. In the end, it was truly a matter of talent. If the Paragon of Pills wished to make the second-ranked pill, she would have to pay an enormous price and spend an extremely long period of time while using up many precious materials.

Ordinary Daolords would kill themselves and still fail to find any of the twelve pills, to say nothing of the top five.

“My race was lucky enough to stumble onto a few. I rendered a few merits and so was rewarded with a pill.” Daolord Laya smiled. “Fellow Daoists, I’m going to begin now. I hope that once my Daomerge concludes,

I will have gained my eternity.”

“Gain eternity.” Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord quietly looked at him, mentally wishing him luck.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Daolord Laya sat down in the lotus position. He closed his eyes, then took a deep breath. The fragrance in the surrounding area quickly flooded into his body. Slowly, ripples of power began to emanate from within his body, which started to shine with blurry golden light. This was the light of the Dao.

“He has started his Daomerge,” Ninedust said.

Ning watched carefully as well. “I wonder if he will succeed.” Even as a mere spectator, Ning still felt a sense of pressure weighing down on his heart. The Daomerge... in the end, it was the final end which awaited all Daolords.

“His path is the Dao of Metal,” Ninedust murmured softly. “He’s slowly beginning a final fusion of all of his Samsara Daolord-level insights into the Dao of Metal. If his fusion is completely perfect, then he’ll have created a Dao which shall last unto eternity! However, the slightest of imperfections shall result in failure.”

Ning watched silently. His own Omega Sword Dao might be extremely powerful, but it wasn’t anywhere close to the ‘perfect and eternal’ level. This was true for the first stage, the second stage, and even the hypothetical fourth stage.

What did eternity represent? It meant that a particular Dao was completely flawless and perfect. The passage of time would not age that Dao in the slightest; only then could a Dao truly be worth of the title ‘eternal’.

Daolord Laya was on par with the likes of Ning, Ninedust, and Kongsan. Most likely, he had only mastered a single Supreme Dao. His Daomerge would be somewhat easier than Ninedust’s and Bertulu’s, as all he had to do was simply complete the Daomerge on the basis of the Dao foundation he had already set up. Ning was on an even higher level; for him, reaching true perfection in a Dao was almost impossibly hard.

In Ning's estimation, based on the fact that his first stage Omega Sword Dao was an all-encompassing Dao which had already begun to resonate with the prime essence of the sword, if he did gain eternity with this Dao then it would become on par with the universe's prime essence of the sword itself. One could imagine how hard that would be to achieve!

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Time continued to flow on. Ning and Ninedust both continued to watch. Generally speaking, a Daomerge would take at most a total of nine years! It was difficult to estimate how short the 'shortest' Daomerge would be. It was possible for failure to appear after just two weeks; this was a sign that one's deficiencies were very significant.

"I wonder if he'll be able to crystallize his flower of eternity," Ninedust murmured softly.

"The flower of eternity." An expectant look was in Ning's eyes as well.

When one embarked on the Daomerge, the Dao-tree would once more begin to evolve. Upon reaching the Verge, the Dao-tree within the Jindan chaos region would reach a total of 540,000 meters in height. It must be understood that this was the same height as an Eternal Emperor's Dao-tree! There was no way for the Dao-tree to grow any larger or any taller. When you began to Daomerge, you would need to perfectly merge together all of the insights of the Dao-tree and form a beautiful, eternal flower.

The flowering of the Dao-tree and the blooming of this beautiful flower of eternity was a sign that the Daomerge had been successful. The flower of eternity would contain the gathered and combined insights of every single scrap of Dao the Dao-tree possessed. But if you failed, the flower of eternity would wither just as it started to bloom.

Boom! Boom! Boom! After Daolord Laya had spent two years in the Daomerge process, the golden light around his body suddenly expanded dramatically, becoming dazzling to behold. His aura began to rapidly increase in power and presence, eclipsing the auras of both Ning and Ninedust. The aura continued to climb, rising above the level of any and

every Daolord...

He was someone who had mastered a single Supreme Dao and was significantly more powerful than even Emperor Mirrorsnow had been. Once he gained eternity, he would be on the level of the eight lords of the Sacred Cities.

The Daomerge truly could result in a skyrocketing level of power for any Daolord.

“He’s at the critical time now,” the Ninedust Sectlord muttered softly. “Time to go all out.”

“Success or failure will be determined right now.” Ning watched nervously as well.

The Daomerge had already gone on for two years. Clearly, Daolord Laya had reached the point where he needed to unleash all of his insights. He had to charge through this final barrier. If he succeeded, then it would be a complete success and he would have gained eternity. But if he was lacking in even the slightest... he would fail.

Boom! Boom! Daolord Laya sat there, an agonized look on his face. Golden light radiated from his entire body in awe-inspiring fashion as the power of the Dao of Metal radiated out from him. His aura continued to grow more powerful, but it also began to shudder.

Whoosh. Suddenly, all of the golden light vanished from him, and his aura quickly began to decay as well.

“Failure.” Both the Ninedust Sectlord and Ning slowly shook their heads.

“No...” Daolord Laya mumbled to himself. He had been able to ‘see’ that a flower of eternity had already begun to take shape atop the Dao-tree in his Jindan chaos region, but the flower had withered away before having a chance to bloom.

He had failed.

His soul and truesoul had been in the process of transforming into the Eternal Emperor level. The process had clearly failed, and both began to

undergo a final, irreversible crumbling. This crumbling was extremely slow, but there was no way to stop it at all, as the crumbling was occurring at the very center of his being. If he didn't fight, the crumbling would take an extremely long time to complete, but each time he engaged someone else in battle he would be hastening the end of his own life.

Still seated above the triangle altar, Daolord Laya opened his eyes. He looked at Ning and Ninedust, a hint of grief in his eyes, then let out a pained smile. "Fellow Daoists, the Daomerge truly is harder than all else under the heavens. I had my altar, used spirit-pills, and had the assistance of the Stone Censer of Reunion. I felt extremely good about my chances, but I still failed. The flower of eternity withered away as soon as the bud appeared. It didn't even have a chance to bloom. Clearly, I wasn't even close."

"Laya, failing the Daomerge is normal," Ninedust said consolingly. "In the end, very few are able to complete the Daomerge, and Daolords on our level of power who can do so are even more rare."

# Chapter 14: Daolord Badlands

Ji Ning and Ninedust could both understand how Daolord Laya felt right now. Cultivation was like climbing a mountain; you slowly started at the very bottom of the mountain, overcoming many difficulties before you finally reached the top. The final step you took next would determine if you rose into the heavens or fell into an endless abyss. Daolord Laya had failed his Daomerge; clearly, he had fallen into the endless abyss. His soul and truesoul had already begun to crumble, and he could already see his future death. His path of cultivation was about to come to an end. Even though he had mentally prepared himself long ago, he would still feel great pain.

“I’ve cultivated for many years, but it all ends today.” Daolord Laya shook his head, then let out a hoarse chuckle. “When I was young, I fought hard to climb to the very top. Only then did I learn how tough things were for my race. After becoming a Daolord, my every thought was consumed with taking care of my race...

“It’s been too long, and I’m far too tired. I’ve spent my entire long life in the Terror Starsea,” Daolord Laya said. “I’ve never even visited the Endless Territories.”

Daolord Laya rose to his feet, then waved his hand and put away the triangle altar.

“Brother Darknorth. Brother Ninedust.” Daolord Laya looked at the two of them. “I’m going to leave now. I plan to pay a visit to the Endless Territories and learn about it! In fact, I might even go off into the Great Dark. Before I die, I want to see as much as of the universe as I can.”

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord no longer knew what to say.

“No need to send me off.” Daolord Laya strode quickly towards the exit.

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The two watched as Daolord Laya left, both filled with regret. Daolord Laya no longer cared one whit about Thundersouth Palace, electing to



leave immediately. Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord, however, still did care, because the various paintings hanging on the walls of the palace represented various techniques that the lord of the palace had left behind for others.

“Thankfully, he didn’t go crazy.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. “I’ve seen Verge-level Daolords go absolutely insane after they failed their Daomerge.”

“He trained since he was young and has cultivated his entire life...” Ning continued to stare in the direction Daolord Laya had left. “He trained tens of thousands of chaos cycles... but all of a sudden he failed his Daomerge and brought his cultivation path to an abrupt halt. This would be extremely disheartening for any cultivator. It makes sense for some to be mentally affected by it.”

“Hmph. There are some evil Daolords who normally keep their worst impulses in check and are afraid to act too rashly for fear of being killed by other major powers. After they fail their Daomerge and are guaranteed to perish, they become absolutely fearless and even more detestful than before.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. “But of course, they’ll die in their madness.”

“I wonder what we’ll end up like when we fail our Daomerge?” The Ninedust Sectlord suddenly said.

“When we fail our Daomerge?” Ning stared blankly. Would he fail his Daomerge? Right now, there was no way for him to be sure as to how he would react.

“Maybe we’ll both succeed and gain eternity for ourselves.” Ning smiled.

“Haha. Right. We’ll gain eternity for sure.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. “I’ll be a Hegemon when that happens. We Ancient cultivators will have two Hegemons! Haha.”

But both of them understood that the path to eternity was an incredibly difficult one. Normally, less than one in a hundred thousand Daolords would be able to gain eternity, and virtually all of them were ordinary Daolords.

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Ning and Ninedust continued to calmly train within the Thundersouth Palace of the Starflow River, and both improved quite rapidly. Finally, after spending thirty thousand years at the Thundersouth Palace, the Ninedust Sectlord made his breakthrough!

Rumble... an aura of awesome power swept out from the Ninedust Sectlord. He opened his eyes, his face wreathed with smiles. "Haha. I, Redwater, have finally broken through! A Daolord of the Fourth Step... I've finally become a Daolord of the Fourth Step! This has been incredibly difficult. Going from the third step to fourth step was a thousand times harder than going from the first step to the third step. Haha... I've finally broken through!"

"Congratulations, brother Ninedust," the nearby Ning said.

"Yes, this is indeed worth celebrating. I was trapped at the third step for far, far too long." The Ninedust Sectlord smiled as he looked at Ning. "It was all thanks to this Stone Censer of Reunion. If it wasn't for it, I would've wasted another chaos cycle or two before making my breakthrough. I had already gained certain insights in the trial the Ancient ancestor left behind, allowing me to vault to a new level on this trip."

"With this step you now stand at the very peak of power amongst Daolords, Ninedust," Ning said.

Ninedust nodded, looking rather pleased. He was someone who had perfectly joined together two Supreme Daos. Now that he had reached the fourth step, he immediately stood amongst the ranks of the absolute most powerful Daolords in the world. He was on the same level as Daolord Skyaxe or Palace Lord Dawnstar. There might be differences in power due to different secret arts and different treasures, but those differences wouldn't be too great; they were all on the same overall level of power.

The more powerful you were, the more difficult it would be to go from the third step to the fourth step. Daolord Badlands, for example, had also been trapped at the third step for a very, very long period of time.

"Darknorth, you are no longer a match for me," Ninedust said quite

smugly.

“That’s not necessarily true,” Ning replied. “Don’t forget that I’m a Heartforce Cultivator. I’ve gained some insight into the illusions of the Thundersouth Hegemon over these past few years as I’ve studied his paintings. You might not be able to fully resist my illusions now.” If he could trap his enemy in illusions for even an instant, it would have an impact on how any fight would result.

“Uh...” Ninedust blinked, then immediately said, “Hmph, I need a bit of time to solidify my foundation, as I’ve just recently made my breakthrough. Give me some more time to further strengthen my soul and your illusions won’t be able to touch me at all.”

Ninedust’s face suddenly tightened. “My Dao is now strong enough. I’ve reached the Verge of the Daomerge as soon as I reached the fourth step. I should make more preparations as well... right now, I have no confidence in my Daomerge chances whatsoever.”

Ning was startled. Right. Ninedust was now at the Verge as well.

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The distant Badlands Territory. In the Badlands Everworld, there was a legendary place known throughout the Endless Territories... the Waveshift Realm! This was a realm that had been left behind by Emperor Waveshift himself. He was renowned as the number one Numerancy expert of the Endless Territories, and was far more powerful than the current Daolord Badlands. He was a mysterious man who appeared and disappeared without warning, and even the three Hegemons found it difficult to deal with him as his schemes and calculations were simply too frightening.

Emperor Waveshift had hidden valuable treasures within the Waveshift Realm. This was something he had said publicly before leaving the Endless Territories and venturing off into the endless Great Dark.

Many generations of Daolords had entered this place to try their luck, and Daolord Solesky was one of them.

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The Waveshift Realm was a place that seemed to be covered by an enormous blurry barrier. The dim light of sunset covered this entire realm, and some cultivators could be seen passing by it on occasion. Most kept a very safe distance, as the Waveshift Realm was simply too dangerous.

Rumble... suddenly, a dazzling streak of green light shot out from the Waveshift Realm. This streak of light stretched out countless kilometers, streaking up into the heavens and piercing through the world-barrier protecting the entire Badlands Everworld.

Rumble... a second dazzling streak of bloody light shot out, just as wide and large as the first one. It shot out towards another direction.

Black light, violet light, azure light... a total of nine streaks of light shot out. These nine streaks of light looked almost like a peacock spreading its feathers as they shot towards different directions. They pierced through everything in their path, be it mountains or mist, but they seemed completely illusory. They caused no damage at all to anything they passed through, leaving even the grass completely untouched.

“What’s going on?”

“What is this? Is something happening?”

The Badlands Everworld was the center of the entire Badlands Territory. Countless cultivators were gathered here, and all of them were puzzled, especially the Elder Gods and True Gods. However, when they saw the light shoot out from the Waveshift Realm they all realized that this was something far beyond their level.

“What’s going on in the Waveshift Realm?”

“Is something happening?”

The Badlands Court was the paramount power within the Badlands Everworld, and its disciples all stared off in the distance.

“Husband.” A married couple was standing together in the skies, staring off into the distance. The beautiful wife turned to look at her husband, concerned.

An azure-robed Daolord Badlands was staring towards the light, a complex look on his face. He shook his head slightly. "I was too proud and rash, too certain in my Numerancy skills. Compared to Emperor Waveshift, I'm still lacking by quite a bit. I just caused a bit of a catastrophe. I don't think there will be any way to hide this. Ugh. I only have my avatar inside, but big brother Solesky will be in trouble."

"Caused a catastrophe?" The beautiful wife asked worriedly, "Will it impact our Badlands Court?"

"The two of us should leave the Badlands Territory for now and hide for a time. For now, let us just leave an avatar behind to watch over things," Daolord Badlands said.

"Hide?" She had never imagined that things would be so grave that they would have to flee and hide somewhere else.

# Chapter 15: Voidsea Jadeseal

“Soon, many Daolords will be charging to this sector,” Daolord Badlands said solemnly. “If my true body remains here, I might very well fall. However, so long as I leave and ensure they cannot find my true body, they won’t dare to cause our Badlands Court any trouble. In the end, my Dao of Numerancy is a Dao for divination, not battle. My skills lie in avoiding trouble and finding fortunes.”

“Mm.” The beautiful woman nodded.

“Let’s go. Right away.”

A short while later, Daolord Badlands and his wife silently departed from the Badlands Everworld, leaving only an avatar behind to guard over the Badlands Court.

The Dao of Numerancy was indeed an extremely troublesome Dao for everyone, but it was highly unsuited for actual battle. Daolord Badlands himself almost never went out adventuring or into battle. As a Daolord of the Third Step who had reached an extremely high level in the Dao of Numerancy, he logically should’ve been on the same level as the likes of Ninedust (at the third step) or Kongsan, but in reality he was much weaker in combat. He was just barely on par with the likes of Solesky and Clearwind.

This was his greatest weakness. However, his skills lay in avoiding trouble; when he encountered enemies he was unable to defeat, he’d quickly move to avoid them.

In the end, the Dao of Numerancy was about divination, not omniscience. As a result, he had suffered greatly for his overconfidence alongside Daolord Solesky in the Waveshift Realm. Clearly, even he fell for the traps left behind by Emperor Waveshift, and so he hurriedly slunk away from his own everworld.

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“Nine beams of light have appeared in the skies over the Waveshift

Realm?”

“Something big just happened.”

No matter what, the Badlands Everworld was still the core of this territory. The Dao Alliance had stationed a number of cultivators here who were responsible for diplomacy with Daolord Badlands and watching over the various treasure auctions! In addition, some of the supreme organizations within the Endless Territories had inserted scouts to watch over the Waveshift Realm. Although these scouts weren't that powerful, they were only required to keep a long-term watch over Waveshift City. Waveshift Realm was simply an incredibly famous place of the Endless Territories.

“Hurry up and send a report.”

“Something big has happened in the Waveshift Realm.”

The scouts had been waiting here for far too long with nothing to report. Some had been waiting for tens of thousands of chaos cycles, and it was all for the sake of critical moments like this. Thus, none of them dared to slacken off.

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Soon, the news spread from the Badlands Territory to the rest of the Endless Territories.

A dazzlingly beautiful green planet. This world had countless cultivators living within it. In one corner of this vast world, there was an ordinary wooden house that merely had a single old man seated within it. The old man had curly green hair and a pair of horns on his head, and his eyes were lidded. He had been seated here for more than ten thousand chaos cycles.

He had been alive for far, far too long.

“Patriarch! Patriarch!” A voice rang out from afar. The green-haired elder opened his eyes, and they seemed to contain the boundless vastness of the universe itself within them. His gaze was gentle as he stared outside.

A golden-robed figure was leading a green-haired man who had an exalted aura towards the patriarch. The green-haired man landed, then said respectfully, "Patriarch." He had become a lord of a Sacred City, and in power he was roughly on par with this particular Patriarch, but he still showed the old man the utmost of respect. The old man had shown him great kindness. Although they weren't master and disciple, he owed the old man as much as any master. The old man had also done much for their entire homeland, far more than anyone else. Without the Patriarch, their lineage would've been wiped out long ago.

"Qixiao, why have you come back to our homeland to meet with me?" The green-haired elder smiled.

"Patriarch." Emperor Qixiao said seriously, "Do you still remember Emperor Waveshift?"

"Remember him? Of course I remember him." A nostalgic look appeared on the old man's ancient face. "After I became an Eternal Emperor, I spent countless years studying the Dao of Numerancy myself. I had once believed myself to be a pre-eminent master of this Dao in the Endless Territories, but after meeting Waveshift and testing myself out I realized that I wasn't even close to being a match. His skill in Numerancy vastly, vastly surpassed my own."

"You are being too modest, Patriarch. Emperor Waveshift relied on the Dao of Numerancy to become an Emperor; of course he was skilled in it! You, on the other hand, only started studying it after becoming an Emperor. He's left the Endless Territories long ago. In the present day, you are number one in this Dao," Emperor Qixiao said.

"For now, I suppose. There's a young fellow named 'Daolord Badlands' in the Badlands Territory who is even more talented than Emperor Waveshift was in Numerancy. He's a Daolord of the Third Step but is already incredible at Numerancy. Once he becomes a Daolord of the Fourth Step, he'll probably surpass me in that Dao and become a king of the Endless Territories." The old man shook his head. Moments later, his face tightened slightly as the illusion of the cosmos within his eyes suddenly vanished. He raised his head to look at Emperor Qixiao. "Have



you come here because of the Badlands Territory... no. To be precise, you have come because of the Waveshift Realm?”

“Impressive, Patriarch.” Emperor Qixiao said hurriedly, “I have indeed come because of the Waveshift Realm! Just now, I received word that something major has happened there. Nine streaks of light shot out from the Waveshift Realm and went through the entire Badlands Everworld.”

“That’s quite a commotion. Can it be... that the Voidsea Jadeseals have emerged?” The old man was stunned.

“That was my first reaction as well. Before Emperor Waveshift departed, he fashioned multiple Voidsea Jadeseals. However, he only left one of them to the Dao Alliance. He put the other five within his own Waveshift Realm,” Emperor Qixiao said.

The old man nodded. “Back then, brother Waveshift told me that if any Eternal Emperor dared to forcibly enter his realm, all five seals would instantly be destroyed. Only Daolords would be permitted to acquire them.”

“Patriarch, these seals are supreme Daomerge treasures!” Emperor Qixiao said hurriedly, “If we can acquire those five seals, we might be able to produce one or two formidable Eternal Emperors for our race.”

“Yes.” The old man nodded. Voidsea Jadeseals... they were described as supreme Daomerge treasures because they were publicly acknowledged as being the best treasures for assisting cultivators in the Daomerge. No treasures surpassed them!

Voidsea Jadeseals were single-use items. After you acquired them and as you prepared for your Daomerge, you could form an illusory body within the seal, then use that illusory body to test out the Daomerge. The process would be identical to that of the actual Daomerge you would undergo! Even if you failed your Daomerge, it wouldn’t harm your true body in the slightest! It was equivalent to giving you an additional shot at the Daomerge.

This additional experience was more than enough to drive any Daolord mad with lust.

Why was the Daomerge so terrifying? It was precisely because the Daomerge was a one-time event. If you were even slightly lacking, you would fail and never have another shot at it. If you had multiple shots at it, then obviously your second attempt would benefit from your previous experience and give you a far better chance at succeeding in the Daomerge!

However, given how incredible the Voidsea Jadeseals were, they were naturally incredibly rare as well. They could only be fashioned through the usage of a strange treasure known as voidsea jade, and they could only be fashioned by Emperor Waveshift, who had reached truly inconceivable heights in the Dao of Numerancy. Prior to his departure, he had used up his entire supply of voidsea jade to create these six seals.

He had left one seal with the Dao Alliance and the other five at the Waveshift Realm. This was why so many generations of Daolords had ventured off into the Waveshift Realm, but thus far none of them had been able to find the Voidsea Jadeseals.

“The power of the Voidsea Jadeseals is enough to allow a Daolord who has a single Supreme Dao to undergo a single full Daomerge attempt. However, if that Daolord has perfectly fused multiple Supreme Daos together, he’ll only be able to make it halfway through the Daomerge before the power of the seal is used up.” The old man sighed.

This was the limit to what the Voidsea Jadeseal could accomplish. If someone who had joined together multiple Supreme Daos together succeeded into the Daomerge, that person would become a Hegemon! There was no way a Voidsea Jadeseal could fully divine such a process.

However, a Daolord who had a single Supreme Dao would be able to try out an entire complete Daomerge.

It must be remembered that there were incredibly few figures in the Endless Territories who were capable of comprehending and mastering multiple Supreme Daos. Thus, these seals were more than enough for the vast majority of Daolords. Even the most ungodly powerful of Daolords would be able to at least divine half of the Daomerge process.

“Patriarch, can you verify that the disturbance in the Waveshift Realm was indeed caused by the emergence of the Voidsea Jadeseals?” Emperor Qixiao asked.

“Let me take a look.” The old man closed his eyes and began to engage in Numerancy calculations as strange ripples of power appeared around him.

A long time later, the old man opened his eyes and nodded. “Tell the younger members of our race that the Waveshift Realm truly has unleashed its Voidsea Jadeseals. I imagine that brother Waveshift did this deliberately to draw many Daolords to his realm, which is why he didn’t hide anything and allowed me to calculate it all with ease. Any of the top ten Numerancy experts in the Endless Territories is capable doing the same.

“Voidsea Jadeseals?” Emperor Qixiao’s eyes lit up. “If we’re certain, then we have to get them for ourselves.”

# Chapter 16: Everyone Gathering

Within a region of space that was completely cut off from the rest of the universe. This was a region that was filled with endless blood flames that seemed to form an entire ocean. Every single flame possessed awesome might and was capable of easily incinerating a Daolord of the Fourth Step. At the very center of the flames, there was an imperial throne that seemed to have been carved out of white bone. The enormous white bone throne hung there, and above it stood a silver-haired man whose hands were resting on the armrests. The man stared at the endless flames, and his heart and mind seemed to be completely one with the world.

“Gorsch.” A voice suddenly rang out within the empty region. “Come forth.”

The silver-haired man was startled. Ever since learning that his most talented progeny, Gorho, had been recruited by the Brightshore Kingdom, he had felt much at ease. He had temporarily chosen to enter their racial lands to train; why was it that he was now being ordered to come out?

“Coming,” the silver-haired man said respectfully. Whoosh. He disappeared from atop the throne of white bone, which continued to eternally hang there above the endless sea of blood flames.

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The silver-haired man appeared within a beautiful, ancient palace. The throne of this palace was occupied by an exceedingly handsome youth who was dressed in gaudy black robes and whose eyes seemed to contain the vast cosmos within them.

“Emperor,” the silver-haired man said respectfully.

“Gorsch, I just received word that Voidsea Jadeseals have appeared within the Waveshift Realm of the Dao Alliance’s Badlands Territory.” The icy-faced black-robed youth spoke in an extremely calm voice. Although he looked very young, he was actually the oldest and most venerable Eternal Emperor of the entire Aeonian race. He was perpetually stationed within the core palace of the Aeonian Kingdom, and it was his

responsibility to watch over their ancestral lands.

“Voidsea Jade seals?” The silver-haired man revealed a stunned look.

“You’ve reached the Verge of the Daomerge long ago, and you are fast approaching the great limit,” the black-robed youth said coldly. “You are, at present, the most powerful Daolord of our race! Although the jade seals are not strong enough to allow you to fully experience the complete Daomerge, you’ll at least be able to experience part of it. This is a rare opportunity for you and your Daomerge. However, word of this has already spread and all six of the major powers of the Endless Territories have been informed. I trust that many Verge-level Daolords are already on their way. What’s worse, you are an Aeonian while Emperor Wavesift was of the Dao Alliance. It is entirely possible that he might’ve prepared something nasty for our race there. If you go, you’ll take on a certain degree of risk.”

“You can choose for yourself whether or not you wish to go,” the black-robed youth said.

“Everyone in the outside world refers to me as King Gorsch, but in the end I’m just a king, not an emperor.” The silver-haired man said in a low voice, “My limit approaches, and I have no confidence in my Daomerge chances at all. Although this opportunity is filled with peril, I still have to give it a try. If I can acquire one of those seals, my chances at the Daomerge shall become much greater.”

“Right.” The black-robed youth nodded.

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The Brightshore Kingdom.

A figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere atop an ordinary-looking wasteland. It was a white-bearded old man who was dressed in snowy white robes and who had six horns on his head. He stood there atop the lands, then opened his mouth: “Ninestone.”

Rumble... the vast wilderness began to shake as the earth itself began to bulge upwards. An enormous four-legged stone behemoth that was

covered in countless sharp spikes emerged from beneath the ground, leaving behind an enormous crater that was over a hundred million kilometers in circumference. The Brightshore Imperials were all Chaos Godbeasts, and they were legendary for their size.

“Hegemon.” The four-legged stone behemoth stared at the almighty Hegemon.

“You merged yourself into the earth itself to better understand the Dao of Earth. Of the Brightshore Imperials, you are closest to the lifespan limit. Are you confident in your Daomerge chances?” the Brightshore Hegemon asked.

In truth, the almighty Hegemon was quite worried. Although the Brightshore Imperials had many generations of Chaos Godbeasts, thus far only a single one had become a Hegemon – himself. Fortunately, he was powerful enough all by himself to overawe the entire Endless Territories. However, the fact that his race had yet to produce a second emperor meant that he was forced to continuously kidnap some of the geniuses of the other races of the Endless Territories.

Palace Lord Dawnstar, Bertulu, Ji Ning... all of them had been kidnapped. They now belonged to the Twelve Palaces of Brightshore, which were actually more powerful than the Brightshore Imperials themselves. But of course, they were no match for the Hegemon.

“I am not confident,” Ninestone rumbled softly.

“Voidsea Jadeseals have appeared within the Waveshift Realm of the Badlands Territory! You might have a shot at one of them,” the almighty Hegemon said. “However, this will be filled with danger. These seals were fashioned by the most skilled Numerancy expert the Endless Territories has ever seen, Emperor Wave seal, and he had to use up his supply of voidsea jade in order to create them. There’s only a few of the seals, and they’ve aroused the attention of quite a few Verge-level Daolords. Many reclusive, normally low-key Daolords have all made their appearances.

“You can choose for yourself whether or not you wish to go.” The almighty Hegemon disappeared into thin air after speaking.

“Waveshift Realm of the Dao Alliance?” Ninestone’s body blurred as he transformed into a human shape. He now looked like an incredibly muscular black-armored man whose eyes were as still as a pool of dead water.

Ninestone was known amongst the Brightshore Imperials as the Ninth King.

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“Voidsea Jade seals have actually appeared?” Daolord Skyaxe and Daolord Soleman were seated within a flying vessel in the void.

“What’s this?” Daolord Soleman called out with surprise.

“Voidsea Jade seals have appeared in the Waveshift Realm,” Daolord Skyaxe said. “I just received word of this. I imagine the Brightshore Kingdom should receive word soon as well.”

“Let me ask.” Daolord Soleman nodded, then soon nodded a second time. “The Twelve Palaces have just received word as well. The jade seals really have appeared.”

“Shall we go?” Daolord Skyaxe looked at Soleman.

“Of course!” Soleman nodded. “This is our best shot at the Daomerge.”

“Let’s go.”

The two immediately changed their plans, turning around their flying vessel and sending it towards the Waveshift Realm instead.

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Within an ordinary mortal city. Countless mortals lived in this region for up to a hundred years. They lived ordinary lives and had to work hard for their living.

This city had a famous blacksmith who was very skilled in creating weapons, especially sabers. However, he only smithed when he was in the right mood, and his smithy was only occasionally operational.

“I’ll give you two golden vastluck coins. Help me forge a suitable saber

for me.” A youth and his servants were present, and they spoke and acted in a very arrogant manner.

“Two golden vastluck coins?” The ordinary-looking blacksmith, dressed in hemp clothes, called out in astonishment, “Each of these are worth as much as ten thousand ordinary gold coins, right?”

“Precisely,” the youth said proudly.

“What a fortune! But... haven’t you heard? When I don’t want to work, no one in the world can force me.” The blacksmith snickered, “Run along home, kid.”

“Two golden vastluck coins aren’t enough? How many do you want?” The youth was anxious now.

The blacksmith was about to speak when he suddenly paused. “The Hegemon is saying that Voidsea Jadeseals have just appeared? This is probably the best chance that I, Dawnstar, will have to improve my Daomerge odds.” The blacksmith’s eyes became as tranquil as the sea as he glanced at the youth and the others. “Cancel it all.”

Whoosh. The entire city – in fact, the entire world – all vanished into motes of glittering, astral saber-light. All of the living beings had been nothing more than incarnations created by saber-light, not actual living beings. This was nothing more than a training mechanism he engaged in.

“Waveshift Realm, eh?” He sheathed his machete into the scabbard on his back. He had a look in his eyes that was calm but which could bring fear to countless cultivators. Moments later, he vanished into thin air after taking a single step.

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The Dao Alliance, the Aeonians, the Brightshore Kingdom, the Aberrants, the Ancient cultivators... all of them quickly received word. Even the powerful Daolords of the Dark Kingdom were intrigued.

The Aeonians were on rather bad terms with the Dao Alliance, but for the sake of the Daomerge, King Gorsch and several other Verge-level Daolords decided to brave the risk and give it a shot.



The same was true for the Dark Kingdom. Verge-level Daolords, for the sake of completing their Daomerge, were absolutely fearless. They began to stealthily move towards the Badlands Territory as well.

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Even the most powerful of Daolords would feel despair when faced with the Daomerge. When the legendary Voidsea Jadeseals, the most supreme Daomerge treasures, suddenly appeared... countless Daolords were intrigued and agitated. There were many Daolords who were low-key, but that didn't mean they were weak.

Emperor Heartsword was a classic example. He was very low-key, and only fought after becoming a Daolord of the Fourth Step due to an irreconcilable grudge. He gained great fame through that battle, and when he succeeded in his Daomerge he became the most dazzling Eternal Emperor in existence. Even now, people whispered stories about him.

Another example was Daolord Everstarter of the Sword Palace of the Brightshore Kingdom. He had also been a very low-key figure who lived in the Sword Palace and rarely went out adventuring. However, when the Ancient cultivators went too far in their actions and forced his hand, he consecutively slew three of their Verge-level Daolords and then defeated one of their Emperors. He was publicly acclaimed as the most powerful Daolord of the Endless Territories in his time.

Clearly, the appearance of these seals caused many of the normally low-key but incredibly powerful Daolords to make their appearances.

None of them would hesitate over something which could increase their chances at completing their Daomerge. Not even death could stop them!

# Chapter 17: Trouble For Vastheaven Palace

The Terror Starsea. The Starflow River. Within Thundersouth Palace, Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were still training calmly here.

“Eh?” The Ninedust Sectlord’s face suddenly turned pale. He opened his eyes and called out loudly, “Darknorth. Darknorth!”

“What is it?” Ning was seated atop a prayer mat and was using the beneficial effects of the Stone Censer of Reunion to train. All five of his Supreme Sword Daos had reached the third stage, but he was stuck at the bottleneck of actually combining them together into the third-stage Omega Sword Dao. Although the stone censer was effective in helping him meditate on the Dao, the toughest bottlenecks would still be quite hard to resolve.

“Something big just happened.” The Ninedust Sectlord looked rather excited. “Have you heard of the Waveshift Realm in the Badlands Territory of your Dao Alliance?”

“I have.” Ning was startled. That place was quite close to his own homeland, the Three Realms. His big brother Solesky was in that realm right now. How could he not be familiar with that place?

“The Voidsea Jadeseals have emerged from the Waveshift Realm.” The Ninedust Sectlord said excitedly, “All six of the major organizations in the Endless Territories already know about this matter. Many Verge-level Daolords have gone crazy. Most who have heard about this have already headed to the Badlands Territory and are going to enter the Waveshift Realm.”

“Voidsea Jadeseals?” Ning was stunned. That was a supreme Daomerge treasure! Any Verge-level Daolord would go crazy over such an item. The entire reason why so many Verge-level Daolords dared to charge into the Terror Starsea and other terrifyingly dangerous place was because they had long ago stopped worrying about the chances of dying; to them, their only goal was to do their utmost to increase their chances in the Daomerge. When word of the Voidsea Jadeseals’ emergence spread, it only

made sense that many Verge-level Daolords would immediately charge into the Waveshift Realm.

“Big brother Solesky is there.” Ning’s heart clenched. “Not good.” It was already dangerous for Solesky to traverse the Waveshift Realm to begin with. Now that many Verge-level Daolords had also joined the fray... Solesky simply wasn’t that strong, compared to many of those freaks. He would be in even more danger than before.

“I’m still very, very far away from hitting my lifespan limit. But...” The Ninedust Sectlord’s eyes were glowing with excitement. “Voidsea Jadeseals are legendary, supreme Daomerge treasures! Ever since Emperor Waveshift left, there has been no word of any of these treasures. If we miss this opportunity, we can probably forget about ever having a chance to acquire them. Darknorth, I’ve already decided to go to the Waveshift Realm. How about you? Why don’t we go together? If we join forces, we really would have nothing and no one to fear.”

Now that he was at the fourth step, Ninedust was on the same level of power as Palace Lord Dawnstar, Daolord Skyaxe, King Gorsch, and similar fighters. However, he wouldn’t dare to claim invincibility. For example, he was vulnerable to dangerous illusions and extremely powerful Heartforce Cultivators. It must be remembered that Ning was merely at the second tier amongst Heartforce Cultivators. If the Ninedust Sectlord had to deal with the likes of the Palace Lord of the Heartforce Palace of the Brightshore Kingdom... he really wasn’t confident in his chances. However, things were different for Ning. Ning might not be able to do anything to them, but he was more than strong enough to defend himself.

When dealing with soul and truesoul related attacks, defense was much easier than attack. So long as the difference wasn’t too ridiculously large, Heartforce Cultivators would generally be able to endure enemy heartforce attacks.

“Let’s go.” Ning nodded. “We naturally can’t give up a chance like this.”

“Hahaha! Wonderful. I imagine that the most powerful of the Endless Territories’ famous Daolords will be headed there. And that’s just on the

surface. I imagine many of the powerful but low-key Daolords will be headed there as well.” Ninedust said excitedly, “Darknorth, neither of us are all that famous in the Endless Territories, but when we join forces we really will have no one to fear.”

“Agreed. We can deal with any type of attacks.” Ning felt quite confident as well. The two of them weren’t very famous just yet. Ning had killed Kongsan, there were still very few who knew the name ‘Daolord Darknorth’. As for the Ninedust Sectlord, he wasn’t that famous either. Both weren’t nearly as well-known as King Gorsch, Skyaxe, Dawnstar, or other such figures.

“Let’s not waste time. Let’s head in that direction immediately,” Ning said.

“Agreed. Let’s move right away. If we are too slow, it might end up being taken by others.” The Ninedust Sectlord didn’t want to waste time either.

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The Endless Territories. Vastheaven Palace.

Daolord Solesky and Daolord Battlemaster were already meeting about this matter.

“What?!” Daolord Battlemaster stared at Daolord Solesky in astonishment.

“Ugh. Neither I nor Badlands imagined that something like this would happen. We were moving quite carefully, and you know how skilled Badlands is in Numerancy. Neither of us expected that we’d end up falling into Emperor Waveshift’s trap. We just kicked over the hornet’s nest.” Daolord Solesky shook his head. “Based on what I know, the top organizations of the Endless Territories already know about this. The emergence of the Voidsea Jadeseals will definitely attract an enormous number of Verge-level Daolords to hasten towards us. Compared to them, we’re nothing.”

“Big brother Solesky, don’t worry too much. My guess is that Emperor Waveshift planned this out long ago. There’s no way he would allow

anyone to acquire those jade seals with ease. Anyone who touched them would immediately cause certain spells to be activated that would cause all of this to happen. The entire point was to draw the Verge-level Daolords of the Endless Territories over to the Waveshift Realm to fight over the seals,” Battlemaster said.

“Right. This was indeed part of Emperor Waveshift’s plan.” Solesky acknowledged it as well. “How could any single Daolord possibly be allowed to acquire all five of these legendary seals? Of course their emergence would cause a huge fight and struggle.”

Battlemaster carried out a few calculations, then let out a shocked sigh. “All I can see is a storm of blood and death! The Waveshift Realm is going to become an utter charnel house of frenzied slaughter and murder. I can’t even calculate how many Daolords will die in there.”

“Major powers skilled in Numerancy should be able to calculate how incredibly deadly the Waveshift Realm will be, but no amount of danger will prevent these Daolords from coming,” Daolord Solesky said.

Often, less than one in a hundred thousand Daolord would be able to succeed in the Daomerge, and the vast majority of those who succeeded were extremely ordinary Daolords. The incredibly powerful Daolords... the Endless Territories had been around for countless aeons, but how many powerful Daolords ended up becoming Eternal Emperors?

Based on their calculations, it was highly unlikely that any of the powerful Daolords of this generation would successfully become Eternal Emperors! Thus, everyone would be absolutely fearless in their pursuit of the seals.

“Battlemaster, I suspect that Vastheaven Palace will be in danger as well,” Daolord Solesky said. “This is all my fault. When I went to the Waveshift World, I didn’t imagine what an enormous commotion this would cause. Thus, I didn’t hide the fact that I was heading there. I imagine that a number of people in the Endless Territories know that I entered Waveshift Palace long ago. Those Daolords might come here and seek out trouble for Vastheaven Palace. Your true body should lead our

brothers away from here and hide for a time.”

“Hide?” Daolord Battlemaster frowned. “Very well. I can already vaguely sense that trouble will indeed be coming. I’ll immediately lead our brothers somewhere else to hide for a time.”

Of the Daolords of Vastheaven Palace, Solesky, Brightfish, and Ning all had only avatars present. The only Daolord who had both his true body and his avatar here was Battlemaster! Battlemaster was also skilled in Numerancy. Although he was still inferior to Badlands in Numerancy despite having reached the fourth step when the latter was still stuck at the third, he was still someone who had become a Daolord of the Fourth Stance through Numerancy. If he led the brothers of Vastheaven Palace to hide, there probably really wouldn’t be many who could find them.

Just as they were discussing this matter...

“Big brother.” A voice suddenly rang out as a golden-robed youth walked over. It was Ning’s avatar.

“Ji Ning.” Solesky smiled as he looked at Ning. “I was just about to go talk to you.”

“Because of the trouble in the Waveshift Realm?” Ning immediately asked.

“You know about this as well?” Solesky was startled.

“I just heard about this. Does this have anything to do with you, big brother?” Ning was rather worried. In truth, he was still just a Daolord of the Second Step, and he hadn’t spent much time as a Daolord. Thus, the Brightshore Kingdom hadn’t gone out of its way to inform him of this matter! And in truth, there really was no for them to do so. It was extremely difficult for Ning’s World-level retainer to maintain contact with his clone located in the distant Brightshore Kingdom.

“It does have a bit to do with me. To tell you the truth, Badlands and I were the ones who caused this.” Solesky shook his head, a bitter smile on his face. “We ended up taking a beating, but didn’t get any of the seals at all. Honestly, neither of us had really been expecting that we would. I was

just hoping to get a 'heartshift pearl' and use it to bolster my Daomerge chances. Why would've thought that we'd somehow cause the Voidsea Jadeseals to emerge?

Solesky knew his own limits. Given that no one had been able to acquire the seals despite the passage of countless chaos cycles, how could he possibly hope for himself to acquire it? If he had to blame someone, the only one he could blame was Daolord Badlands for being absolutely incredible in Numerancy. The latter had been able to find and solve some of the more critical questions before them, resulting in them activating the protections which Emperor Waveshift had left behind.

"No need to worry too much about this matter," Daolord Solesky said. "You have enough to worry about in the Terror Starsea. Stay careful!"

"Right." Darknorth, the Terror Starsea is also quite a terrifying and dangerous place. Big brother Solesky at least has Daolord Badlands' avatar helping him out. Given the latter's Numerancy abilities, the two will be able to avoid much trouble. It shouldn't be hard for them to avoid trouble," Daolord Battlemaster said.

Ning let out a sigh of relief when he heard this. Right. In terms of protecting others, even Ning himself probably wouldn't be useful as Badlands' avatar. The latter was simply too powerful in the Dao of Numerancy.

"Right. Darknorth." Daolord Battlemaster asked hurriedly, "When your big brother Solesky first headed to the Waveshift Realm, he didn't really try to hide it. As a result, Vastheaven Palace will probably face some trouble. My true body will hide within Vastheaven Palace alongside our brothers. Will your avatar stay here or accompany us?"

"Wait, what's this about Vastheaven Palace facing trouble?"

# Chapter 18: Daolords Assemble

“I should be the only Verge-level Daolord to have entered the Waveshift Realm in recent memory.” Daolord Solesky said heavily, “I didn’t go out of my way to keep my trip a secret. Although not too many know about my trip, there are still a few Verge-level Daolords who know.”

“The only one?” Ji Ning’s face turned pale.

Daolord Solesky explained, “The Endless Territories have many dangerous locations within them, and the Waveshift Realm holds very few treasures! There’s nothing of real interest aside from the Voidsea Jade seals, making it a much less enticing proposition than the Terror Starsea. Ever since Emperor Waveshift departed, no one has ever been able to find so much as a single one of those seals. Thus, there are now very few Daolords who will brave the dangers of the Waveshift Realm. I should be the only one to have gone inside in recent memory.”

“Then this is going to be trouble.” Ning nodded. “Everyone will be able to guess that someone inside the Waveshift Realm probably caused the enormous stir. If you are the only one who has gone inside lately, you are going to become everyone’s target.”

“Not just me. Even Badlands is going to be in trouble as well.” Daolord Solesky shook his head.

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Daolord Solesky’s prediction was frighteningly accurate. The Badlands Court was indeed in trouble.

BOOM! A wicked black cloud descended upon the entire Badlands Court. A black-robed woman stood at the center of that black cloud. Her skin was green, her eyes were crimson, and she had a pair of curved green horns on her head. She called out in an icy voice, “Badlands!”

“Fellow Daoist Dustrain.” An azure-robed man stood in front of the Badlands Court. It was Daolord Badlands’ avatar.

“An avatar? Are you actually going to send a mere avatar to meet with



me?” Fiendqueen Dustrain let out a cold snort.

Daolord Dustrain was referred to as ‘Fiendqueen’ due to her exceptional strength as well as the fact that she walked a devilish, demonic path. She was publicly acknowledged as the seventh most powerful Daolord of the Endless Territories! But of course, this ranking was only based on the Daolords who had revealed their strength to the outside world. There were many low-key ones who had not, and the outside world knew very little about them. For example, the Ninedust Sectlord was roughly on par with Daolord Dustrain but very few people knew about him.

“I’m quite sorry, but my true body has departed some time ago along with my wife for some sightseeing.” Daolord Badlands’ avatar swept the distant skies with his gaze. “Fellow Daoist Dustrain and the other fellow Daoists off in the distance... I know why all of you have come! The strange and incredible happenings within the Waveshift Realm are indeed related to me. However, I swear on my very life itself that neither I nor Daolord Solesky have acquired so much as a single Voidsea Jadeseal. Haha... Emperor Waveshift plotted all this out in advance. There’s no way he would have let us acquire them with such ease.”

“If you wish to attack, feel free to go ahead and wipe out my avatar. However... I, Badlands, will make it known to all of you that if anyone actually dares to attack, I will repay you tenfold!”

His words complete, Daolord Badlands turned and headed right back into the Badlands Court. He didn’t so much as glance at the many Daolords who had arrived, nor did he pay any attention to Fiendqueen Dustrain in the skies.

“Hmph.” Fiendqueen Dustrain had an ugly look on her face, and the other Daolords off in the distance were all hesitating. They didn’t fear death, but... if Badlands had already decided to ignore them, what were they supposed to do? There was no point in destroying his avatar; that would be a meaningless act.

And, if Daolord Badlands really did elect on taking revenge, he would become a very frightening foe. This would be doubly true once he became

a Daolord of the Fourth Step. By then, he would be the number one master of the Dao of Numerancy within the Endless Territories. Not even Hegemons would be able to prevent him from taking revenge upon his foes!

“It seems that our only choice is to enter the Waveshift Realm. If we go in ahead of the others, our chances might be a bit higher.” Fiendqueen Dustrain pondered for a moment within the skies, then turned and flew straight towards the Waveshift Realm.

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Although the Badlands Court was located within the Badlands Everworld, given that Daolord Badlands had made his position clear and had left merely an avatar behind, there really was no one who chose to attack him.

If his true body was here, he probably would’ve been captured long ago. But just an avatar...

In the end, Daolord Badlands had a sufficiently fearsome reputation and was able to deter these people. Vastheaven Palace, however, did not.

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“I just received word that Daolord Badlands has merely left his avatar to stand guard over the Badlands Court. However, if anyone dares to attack the Badlands Court, he will repay the attacker tenfold in the future.” Two Daolords were chatting as they strode side-by-side through the void. A dimensional tunnel surrounded them, and they were walking straight through it with no need for a spacetime transfer array.

“That was a pretty nasty move!” One of the Daolords was dressed in dark-red armor.

“It seems our only choice is to see if we can get any information from Daolord Solesky.” The other Daolord was dressed in gray robes, and he let out a sigh.

“We’re quite close to the Vastheaven Territory. Given your mastery over the Dao of Space, brother Soletruth, we should be able to get there quite

quickly. In roughly two or so weeks, we should reach Vastheaven Palace. We might even be the first ones there.” The dark-red armored Daolord said coldly, “For the sake of the Daomerge, we have no choice but to employ unpleasant means against Vastheaven Palace.”

“Agreed. Daolord Solesky is the only Verge-level Daolord who has entered as of late, and he certainly knows more about the Waveshift Realm than most. Even if he simply gives us an intelligence report regarding the place, it’ll make our trip into the Waveshift Realm much simpler and our chances of acquiring the Voidsea Jadeseals much higher,” the gray-robed Daolord said.

With so many Daolords heading to the Waveshift Realm, they really weren’t confident in their own chances at all. There were far, far too many who were more powerful than them. However, if they were able to acquire some information in advance, they might have a shot!

A few days later. “We’re about to reach Vastheaven Palace,” the gray-robed Daolord Soletruth said.

“Vastheaven Palace...” A flicker of cold light flashed through the dark-red armored Daolord’s eyes. They would force the information out of Solesky, no matter what they had to do.

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The weather was clear this day, and the skies were like an enormous, beautiful bowl of azure porcelain. The wind was blowing through this world, and two figures were slowly walking through the skies. They could already see Vastheaven Palace up ahead.

“We’ve reached Vastheaven Palace.” The dark-red armored Daolord was slightly excited. “Our best chances lie within Vastheaven Palace.”

“Agreed.” The gray-robed Daolord nodded.

“I’ll go call him out. I refuse to believe that old bastard would dare to refuse us.” A flicker of a murderous intent could be seen in the dark-red armored Daolord’s eyes. They had come here to force Solesky to give them what they wanted.

“SOLESKY!” After having flown slightly closer, the armored Daolord let out a loud call that echoed within the heavens, causing an invisible but baleful aura to spread outwards from him and cover the entire Vastheaven Palace. “SOLESKY! GET OUT HERE!”

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Within a palace courtyard. Ning, Solesky, Battlemaster, and Brightfish were all present. All four of them had only left their avatars behind, and the vast majority of the Vastheaven Palace’s disciples had departed already. The only ones left behind were some disciples who had many clones, as well as a few servants.

“Solesky! Get out here!” A loud bellow rang out from outside.

“Here they come.” Daolord Solesky let out a cold snort. “So someone has finally arrived.”

Ning, Battlemaster, and Brightfish all had mixed looks on their faces. They had predicted long ago that trouble was coming for Vastheaven Palace, as there would definitely be some Daolords who would come for Daolord Solesky! In addition, some were located fairly close by. Some would move quickly while others would move more slowly, but in the end there would be many batches of them. Clearly, the first batch of Daolords had arrived.

“Let’s go take a look and see who it is.” Daolord Solesky arose and walked outside, with Ning, Battlemaster, and Brightfish following behind him.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. All four Daolord avatars flew out into the skies, remaining within the protective embrace of Vastheaven Palace as they stared at the two distant figures.

“That’s Daolord Soletruth and Daolord Mistbearer.” Daolord Solesky’s face tightened slightly as he sent mentally to the other three, “Daolord Soletruth is skilled in the Dao of Space and is an extremely troublesome foe, while Daolord Mistbearer is silled in close combat. These two are both on par with me.”

Ning understood. These two Daolords weren't all that powerful; they were merely on the same level as Solesky and Patriarch Clearwind. The weaker ones wouldn't even try to come here, while there were only a few strong ones; they would need time to make it here.

"Soletruth. Mistbearer. Why have you two come to Vastheaven Palace?" Daolord Solesky barked.

"Stop pretending. Are you trying to tell me that you don't know why we are here?" The distant dark-red armored Daolord Mistbearer let out an angry snarl.

"Is it about the Waveshift Realm?" Daolord Solesky said, "I can swear a lifeblood oath that I do not have any Voidsea Jade seals right now."

"I guessed as much." Daolord Mistbearer smirked. "There's no way the jade seals left behind by Emperor Waveshift would be obtained so easily. However... I need all of the information you know regarding the Waveshift Realm. So long as you provide that to us, the two of us will leave immediately."

Daolord Solesky let out a cold snort. "That's a nice dream you are having. Do the two of you really think you have what it takes?"

He and Daolord Badlands had spent many tens of thousands of years braving the dangers of that place and searching laboriously for as much information they could find. It was all thanks to Daolord Badlands' repeated usage of Numerancy divination that they had learned so many of the secrets of the Waveshift Realm. How could they just send this information out to others?

"This is an item we acquired last time we adventured through the Terror Starsea." The distant Daolord Mistbearer produced a strange stone globe that was covered with many complex runes that faintly emanated a terrifying aura of power. "If I crush this item, I'll be able to annihilate the entire Vastheaven Palace. If you refuse to give me the information I need, I'll have no choice but to use it."

"Speak!" The gray-robed Daolord said coldly, "Will you give us the information or not?"

# Chapter 19: For the Daomerge

“What?” The Daolords of Vastheaven Palace, including Ji Ning, Daolord Battlemaster, Daolord Solesky, and Daolord Brightfish were all shocked. They stared intently at the stone globe held in the hands of Daolord Mistbearer. All of them could sense the faint aura of terrifying power emanating from the stone globe.

“This Daolord Mistbearer actually has an item like this?” Daolord Solesky and the others turned pale.

There were actually quite a number of Dao-seals and other strange curios which had been created by Eternal Emperors and had slowly accumulated over time. This was particularly true for the Terror Starsea, which had been the battlefield of the Dawn War. There were many, many treasures there that were capable of unleashing terrifying levels of power. However, acquiring these treasures was quite difficult. Most Daolords of the Fourth Step did not have access to such treasures.

Daolords on the level of Solesky, Patriarch Clearwind, and Daolord Mistbearer had been alive for quite some time. If they dared to go out adventuring and lived to tell the tale, they would generally end up with one or two of them.

Experts on the level of Kongsan had been alive for even longer. They would generally have nine or ten such items on them.

As for the likes of King Gorsch or Palace Lord Dawnstar, the most powerful of Daolords? They were capable of slaying ordinary Eternal Emperors with ease. A casual blow from them was more than enough to annihilate Vastheaven Palace and held as much power as those strange artifacts and Dao-seals. Thus, those things were of very little use to them! Only precious Hegemon-created items were of interest and use to them, but those were incredibly rare.

These curios were divided into many different types, such as defensive, fleeing, karmic, illusory, offensive, and more.

“Daolord Mistbearer actually has a treasure meant for attacking.”

Daolord Solesky was rather anxious now.

“This treasure is very important to Daolord Mistbearer. The handsome Daolord Brightfish sent mentally, “But for the sake of the Daomerge, he’s gone berserk. He really would be willing to use this treasure up! Everyone, what should we do?”

“Let me give it a try first,” Daolord Battlemaster said.

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The four Daolords of Vastheaven Palace stared at the two enemy Daolords.

“Fellow Daoists.” Daolord Battlemaster called out in a loud voice, “I imagine you have also received word that Daolord Badlands has left the Badlands Court long ago! Vastheaven Palace isn’t staffed by fools either; our brothers have also left long ago. The four of us are merely avatars! Even if you use up that treasure and destroy Vastheaven Palace, you’d at most be able to destroy our avatars. We’re more than capable of enduring such minor losses.”

Daolord Mistbearer and Daolord Soletruth radiated surging, murderous auras from their position in the skies. Daolord Mistbearer said coldly, “The creation of Vastheaven Palace involved you spending enormous amounts of effort in setting up its protective formations. The materials needed to create four avatars were also extremely costly, not to mention the time spent in nurturing them. Would you really just give them up like that?”

“For the sake of the Daomerge, we are indeed willing to give them all up.” Daolord Battlemaster smiled. “I have an idea. Let us have both sides take a step back.”

The distant Daolord Mistbearer and Daolord Soletruth exchanged a glance. “Speak!” Daolord Mistbearer commanded coldly.

“Vastheaven Palace is willing to hand over an intelligence report containing information regarding the Waveshift Realm,” Daolord Battlemaster said. “While it won’t include everything big brother Solesky knows, it’ll still be far more than what the rest of the universe knows

about the Waveshift Realm. What do you think? If the two of you accept, we'll give you the report right away."

"It has to include everything Daolord Solesky knows!" Daolord Mistbearer shouted coldly. As his voice boomed out, an infinitely vast wave of blood appeared out of nowhere, sweeping through the skies and surrounding the entirety of Vastheaven Palace.

Daolord Mistbearer's murderous aura flared as he roared, "If you refuse, die!"

"Solesky, stop struggling," Daolord Soletruth barked as well.

"You are going too far!" Daolord Battlemaster said coldly, "My big brother and Daolord Badlands experienced countless travails in order to find this information. You want them to hand it all over? Impossible!"

"Do you take the two of us for fools? Emperor Waveshift was the creator of the Waveshift Realm. He was and remains the most skilled expert in the Dao of the Numerancy the Endless Territories has ever seen. The Waveshift Realm is filled with many dangers and is incredibly complex. If you just give us a portion of your information, it'll be of negligible use to us." Daolord Soletruth said coldly, "Battlemaster, stop playing games with us. We aren't fools. You have two options before you. To hand it over, or to not hand it over."

"I will claim the life of anyone who dares to bar my Daomerge!" The distant Daolord Mistbearer raised the stone globe up high with one hand, his voice filled with murder. "I'll give you three seconds to consider this. If you refuse, I'll wipe you out!"

"Three!"

"Two!"

Daolord Mistbearer stood there in the skies, surrounded by endless surging waves of blood, the stone globe held up high and flaring in one final warning. For the sake of the Daomerge, he wouldn't show any mercy at all.

"But..." Solesky, Battlemaster, and Brightfish all turned pale. As for Ning,



he had a complex look on his face.

“Everyone shares the same concern – the Daomerge. Why must we be like this? This stroke of Daomerge-related fortune belongs to my big brother. Today, you come to pressure him; tomorrow, others will do the same. Are we to repeatedly give way and just hand this opportunity over to others?” Ning shook his head. “You two should leave. If you refuse to leave, I’ll have no choice but to attack.”

“Attack?” The two distant Daolords were both startled.

Ning’s face gradually turned cold. “Leave.”

The faces of the two distant Daolords turned grim. They were slowly beginning to sense the threat that Ning posed them. Previously, Ning had not yet wished them dead... but now that he did, the sense of danger radiating from him grew significantly stronger. Ning’s avatar was roughly on par with them; if his true body was here, the sense of danger would have been much stronger.

“No one can bar my path to the Daomerge.” Daolord Mistbearer and Daolord Soletruth shared a glance, but neither hesitated.

“Hand over the report or prepare to do battle!” Daolord Mistbearer roared.

A flicker of a murderous light flashed through Ning’s cold eyes. An invisible surge of power instantly sprang out, separating into two streams that smashed directly against the souls and the truesouls of the two Daolords.

Heartforce Eradicator!

“This...” A hint of terror and disbelief flashed through Daolord Mistbearer’s eyes before his gaze turned completely dull and lifeless. His corpse began to fall down from the skies.

“He’s a Heartforce Cultivator!” The gray-robed Daolord Soletruth’s face turned bone-white, but he was able to endure the [Heartforce Eradicator] attack. He stared at Ning in horror. That heartforce attack had been absolutely terrifying; it was only thanks to his strong Dao-heart that he

had managed to survive! However, he knew that Heartforce Cultivators possessed many strange and unpredictable techniques, and they didn't really rely on such brutish attacks. They primarily relied on illusions and bewildering spells... and if this Daolord's brute-force attacks were already this powerful, how devilish would his illusions be? Even an instant of distraction could very well prove fatal!

"Hurry up and flee." Daolord Soletruth no longer cared about anything else. He hurriedly waved his hand. Whoosh! A dazzling rainbow dimensional tunnel instantly appeared next to him, and he hurriedly dove into it and began to flee.

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A tear in space appeared within a region of primordial chaos more than twenty territories away. Moments later, the gray-robed and rather bedraggled-looking Daolord Soletruth jumped out of it, a stunned look on his face. "He's actually a Heartforce Cultivator. The newest Daolord of Vastheaven Palace, Daolord Darknorth... a completely unremarkable person I've heard almost nothing about... is actually a Heartforce Cultivator. And a terrifyingly strong one at that! He was able to kill brother Mistbearer with a thought. Ugh. Brother Mistbearer's Dao-heart was rather lacking, due to his excessively murderous impulses."

"I never would've imagined that the most powerful member of Vastheaven Palace would be Daolord Darknorth, rather than Daolord Solesky." Daolord Soletruth let out a soft sigh. "Things are going to be complicated now. Everyone thought that Vastheaven Palace would be easy to deal with, but who would've thought such a terrifying figure would exist within it?"

Everyone agreed that Heartforce Cultivators were notoriously difficult to deal with. Unless absolutely necessary, no one would willingly make an enemy out of one.

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Outside Vastheaven Palace.

The corpse of Daolord Mistbearer continued its descent through the

skies. As for Daolords Solesky, Battlemaster, and Brightfish, all three of them stared at Ning in disbelief.

“All this is due to the Daomerge...” Ning shook his head, then waved his hand and collected the falling corpse of Daolord Mistbearer. Ning then turned around, only to see the other three staring straight at him.

“Something wrong? I’m just collecting his corpse. We can split the treasures later,” Ning grinned.

“Stop joking.” Daolord Solesky flew straight towards Ning, then grabbed him by the shoulders. “Ji Ning, y-you... you are a Heartforce Cultivator?”

“Right. You are actually a Heartforce Cultivator?” Battlemaster and Brightfish were quite excited as well.

“Yes.” Ning nodded. “Right! Previously, I’ve been spending all my attention on strengthening my avatar. As soon as I left seclusion, this happened. I didn’t even have a chance to talk to any of you. However, better late than never!”

“Not late. Not late at all!” Daolord Brightfish was quite excited. “I never imagined that Vastheaven Palace would produce a Heartforce Cultivator! Haha. Who in the outside world would dare to belittle us in the future?”

“I always thought that you were a genius of the Dao of the Sword.” Daolord Solesky stared intently at Ning, also quite excited. “I never would’ve imagined that you’d actually be a Heartforce Cultivator, and that you’d be even more formidable in this area than you are in the Dao of the Sword. You slew Daolord Mistbearer with just a glance!”

Ning couldn’t help but say, “Actually... my Sword Dao is slightly stronger than my heartforce.”

# Chapter 20: Daolord Darknorth's Name

"Your Sword Dao is stronger than your heartforce?" Daolord Solesky stared at Ji Ning in astonishment. He couldn't help but ask, "Ji Ning, what level have you reached, exactly?!"

"I might not be able to beat the most powerful Daolords, but escaping them should be no problem at all," Ning said. In truth, Ning now stood at the very peak of power amongst second-tier Daolords. He was now much stronger than Kongsan had ever been.

Even if he fought against first-tier Daolords like King Gorsch, he might win if their Dao-hearts were weak! If their Dao-hearts were weak and they were trapped by his illusions, then he would have a chance of beating them as well. However, the vast majority of supreme Daolords had extremely powerful Dao-hearts, and so he would be unable to do anything to most of them.

Still, Ning had his Hegemon armor and was extremely skilled at staying alive. He also had his nine novessence arts, his heartworld projection, his ability to transcend space, and more. There really were few to no Daolords who could do anything to him.

"B-but..." Daolord Solesky was rather flabbergasted.

"Darknorth, how did you suddenly become a Heartforce Cultivator?" Daolord Battlemaster was quite curious.

"Early on as a cultivator, I actually improved even more quickly in heartforce than I did in the Dao of the Sword." A reminiscent look was in Ning's eyes. "Afterwards, some events cast a shadow over my heart, resulting in me being unable to improve my heartforce at all. This time, I had some lucky encounters and was able to break through in heartforce and establish a heartworld. As a result, my heartworld naturally began to expand and grow, allowing me to reach my current level of power."

"A master of both the Sword Dao and heartforce. Impressive, truly impressive," Daolord Brightfish said as he sighed in amazement.

Heartforce Cultivators were famous for their bizarre, nerve-wracking techniques. If a Heartforce Cultivator was also skilled in close combat, he'd become absolutely terrifying to deal with. This was just the type of person Ning was.

"Oh, right. Darknorth, why did you release Daolord Soletruth just now?" Daolord Brightfish quickly added, "I could vaguely sense that you only attacked a single time, and you didn't use any illusions at all?"

"Right." Ning nodded. "Since he was able to survive my [Heartforce Eradicator], I decided to spare his life. He'll definitely go tell his Verge-level friends about what happened today and warn them, and those friends will in turn warn their own friends. Thus, word will quickly spread, ensuring that the vast majority of Verge-level Daolords will know better than to come here and cause trouble."

"Ji Ning's choice was correct. We can't be forced to deal with one Daolord troublemaker after another," Daolord Solesky said.

"Darknorth." Battlemaster said worriedly, "The vast majority of Daolords might be too scared to come, but those who do dare to come will be tough to deal with."

"Then I'll simply kill them." A murderous light flashed through Ning's eyes. "We'll see who is stronger."

Ning still felt quite confident in his chances. His Daolord avatar was a Ki Refiner, a Fiendgod Refiner, and a Heartforce Cultivator! He was able to use divine abilities and secret arts. However, Ning realized that there was no way to duplicate his Nine Chaos Seals upon his avatar, and his avatar only contained an extremely small part of his soul. This was why his avatar was still significantly weaker than his true body.

Any living being's core essence came from his soul and truesoul. If the soul or truesoul was extinguished, the cultivator would die. Generally speaking, if your soul and truesoul were weak, the amount of divine power, Immortal energy, and heartforce in your body would also be correspondingly weak. It would be very hard for you to remain in top condition! Thus, you needed to stay in contact with your true body's soul

and ensure that both souls were nurtured.

This was the reason why Daolords generally would at most maintain a single avatar at any point in time. It wasn't easy keeping an avatar's soul in peak condition, and it was quite time-consuming as well!

But of course, if you had a Primaltwin, you would be able to maintain a second avatar. Ning had both a true body and a Primaltwin, and his Primaltwin's soul was just as strong as his true body's. Both souls were inextricably linked. However, Ning chose to only maintain a single avatar, using both his true body and his Primaltwin's souls to nurture it.

As a result, Ning's avatar was comparatively more powerful than that of most Daolord avatars. If the Northbow swords were excluded from the equation, his avatar was roughly 70% as strong as his true body!

His avatar held other advantages as well. Avatars were created from magic treasures that were covered with formations, and they could be infused with prime essences just like lifeblood treasures. Ning's avatar contained the essence of his Omega Sword Dao, and the special properties which all avatars had ensured that he was able to perfectly link up with the local formations and become part of them. When reinforced by those formations, his power was comparable to that of his true body!

This was the reason why many Daolords had their avatars stand guard over their homes.

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Ning's predictions were spot-on. After fleeing for his life, Daolord Soletruth did indeed warn his best friends, who in turn warned their best friends. Word quickly spread at a viral rate, and both Vastheaven Palace and the Badlands Court became centers of attention for the countless Daolords of the Endless Territories.

Daolord Badlands of the Badlands Court had gone into hiding with his wife. Nobody could find them. The only chance the comparatively weaker Daolords had lay in Vastheaven Palace.

“What?! A Heartforce Cultivator?!”

“He was able to slay Daolord Mistbearer from afar with but a thought? Daolord Soletruth was just barely able to stay alive?”

“His avatar alone is already that powerful?”

“What’s the name of this terrifying Heartforce Cultivator of Vastheaven Palace?”

“Darknorth! His name is Darknorth!”

Word quickly began to spread. When Ning had slain Kongsan, he hadn’t gone out of his way to reveal himself, and so there really were very few who knew that he was the killer. As a result, he had little to no reputation in the Endless Territories. However, the incredible results he had displayed with merely an avatar instantly shocked countless Daolords. He hadn’t even really fought! He had wiped out Daolord Mistbearer with but a casual look!

This battle brought him instant fame! Finally, Ning had become truly famous within the Endless Territories. Countless Daolords now knew of a terrifying Heartforce Cultivator known as Daolord Darknorth.

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An ordinary chaosworld. An ordinary mortal city.

Daolord Badlands and his wife were living within a mountain villa inside this city, living a relaxed life.

“What’s that? Daolord Darknorth has become a Heartforce Cultivator? He wiped out Daolord Mistbearer with just his avatar?” Daolord Badlands had been sipping wine in a leisurely manner, but he suddenly revealed a shocked look on his face.

“What did you just say, husband? Daolord Darknorth?” His beautiful wife was shocked as well.

“Yes, Daolord Darknorth. Remember him? The Ji Ning kid who once stayed in our Badlands Court for a short period of time? As I recall, when he arrived in the Badlands Court he was merely an Elder God. Only after returning from the Allgod Estate did he become a World-level cultivator. It

feels like it was just yesterday that he was at the World level! Now, he's actually able to wipe out the likes of Daolord Mistbearer with a thought while just using his avatar? He's definitely much more powerful than I am." Daolord Badlands was quite stunned. He was skilled in Numerancy, but Numerancy didn't confer omniscience upon him. The more talented and powerful a cultivator was, the harder it would be to divine his fate.

"If his avatar is already this powerful, how impressive must his true body be?" His wife was stunned as well. "He's reached such incredible levels of power despite having trained for a very short period of time... in the future, he will most assuredly become one of the most supreme Daolords of all the Endless Territories."

"Even today, there are no Daolords who would dare to underestimate him." Daolord Badlands shook his head. "Because... he is a Heartforce Cultivator."

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The Brightshore Kingdom's intelligence network was similarly quick, and word quickly spread to them as well. The Twelve Palaces of the Brightshore Kingdom were filled with commotion as well.

"Daolord Darknorth of the Sword Palace has ended up becoming a Heartforce Cultivator?"

"From what I've heard, his Sword Dao is incredibly powerful. How is it that he became so formidable in heartforce as well?"

"Daolord Solewind of the Heartforce Palace might be extremely talented, but I don't think he's strong enough to use his avatar to wipe out Daolord Mistbearer with a thought."

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"Darknorth has become a Heartforce Cultivator?" Prince Greatjoy had just returned to the Brightshore Kingdom when he heard this news. He revealed a hint of a smile on his face. "Interesting. I never would've thought that of the four of us who went to the alternate universe, Darknorth would end up taking the lead. It seems I need to work even



harder...”

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Beneath the leaves of a strange, fiery-red tree that was more than ten million kilometers tall sat a skinny bald youth. The youth had a smile on his face, but his eyes were closed as he trained there silently. His upper body was covered with fiery red divine runes which seemed linked to the enormous flaming tree behind him. The runes would sometimes spread out while at other times clustering together...

“Eh?” Solewind opened his eyes, then smiled. “Brother Darknorth has actually become a Heartforce Cultivator, and a powerful one at that? I had thought that I was doing fairly well for myself, after having created a secret art comparable to the [Featherdress Soulthrall Song]. I didn’t expect that brother Darknorth would not only become a Heartforce Cultivator but become even more powerful than me in this area.”

Solewind was actually incredibly talented in heartforce. When he had been at the World level, he had been on par with monstrously talented figures like Greatjoy and Ji Ning. After becoming a Daolord, he would be able to easily reach the Verge and become one of the most powerful of Heartforce Cultivators.

In the Genesis Lands, he had acquired a legacy left behind by a Heartforce Hegemon. He naturally had an extraordinary destiny ahead of him, and he had already created a secret art that was on par with the [Featherdress Soulthrall Song]. Although he had only created the early stages of it, his foundation was already quite solid.

The more solid your foundation was, the slower and steadier your training would be. At present, Solewind was also just a Daolord of the Second Step.

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“No. No way. Impossible. How can he be this much more powerful than me?!” Firesurge was located within a tattered shrine, and he was bellowing with rage. “Impossible! I’ve been working so hard. Why is it that he’s pulling farther and farther away from me?!”

Of the four peerless geniuses who had visited the alternate universe, Firesurge had the weakest mind and Dao-heart. He had always felt certain that he would become the strongest, and had been working hard this entire time. He was now quite powerful... but Darknorth, a master of the Dao of the Sword, had somehow ended up becoming a Heartforce Cultivator, and reached incredibly terrifying heights in heartforce at that.

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The news quickly spread throughout the universe, and everyone had a different reaction to it. Ning's primary goal was achieved – the vast majority of Daolords shrank back. Very, very few had the courage and confidence needed to fight a Heartforce Cultivator.

# Chapter 21: Sincerity

A dimensional rift appeared within a region which bordered both the Endless Territories and the Terror Starsea. Two figures emerged from it, one a white-robed youth who carried a golden sheath on his back, the second an insidious-looking silver-robed man who radiated an aura of power.

“We finally made it.”

“Haha, I didn’t expect things would progress this smoothly.”

Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both sighed in amazement.

“The two of us were so worried about dying at first.” The Ninedust Sectlord laughed. “Thank goodness Patriarch Vulturas gave us that star map, and thank goodness your sword-arts have transcended space, Darknorth. And thank goodness you are also a Heartforce Cultivator!”

“We also need to celebrate our good fortune. The Starflow River was supposed to be the most dangerous part of the journey, but we were so lucky that we didn’t run into anything dangerous at all,” Ning sighed happily.

Their good luck had combined with many other factors, allowing them to survive their return to the Endless Territories.

“Come, come! We need to make haste. We wasted sixty years after leaving Thundersouth Palace, and we’re still quite far from the Waveshift Realm. We’ve already wasted so much time, and if we waste any more the Voidsea Jadeseals will probably end up being taken by those who arrived early on,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

“No rush,” Ning said. “I have a very quick way of travelling straight to the Waveshift Realm.”

“A very quick way?” The Ninedust Sectlord stared at Ning, puzzled.

“Through the spacetime tunnels of the Brightshore Kingdom.” Ning immediately added, “Brother Ninedust, I never spoke to you about this, but... although I am a member of the Dao Alliance, as a World-level

cultivator I was abducted to the Brightshore Kingdom. Thus, I'm a member of the Twelve Palaces of Brightshore."

"The Brightshore Kingdom? You belong to them?" The Ninedust Sectlord was stunned.

"Yes." Ning nodded. Their journey back from the Terror Starsea had been a dangerous one, with life-threatening situations possibly occurring at any moment. In order to avoid any mistrust and anything that could affect their ability to work together, Ning had stayed silent this entire time about his true status. Now that they had shared so many life-and-death experiences for so long, he truly didn't wish to keep this hidden.

"Y-you..." The Ninedust Sectlord had a rather complicated look on his face. He then let out a helpless sigh. "Thankfully you are merely a member of the Twelve Palaces. If you were a member of the Brightshore Imperials, I'd really have no clue what to do. The Brightshore Imperials have always been enemies of us Ancient cultivators. We've been fighting each other for countless chaos cycles."

Ning nodded. The Brightshore Imperials had once been the slaves of the Ancient cultivators, which they viewed as the greatest stain on their honor. It wasn't at all odd that the successive generations of Brightshore Imperials had all viewed the Ancient cultivators as their enemies.

"The Brightshore Hegemon is absolutely shameless." The Ninedust Sectlord gritted his teeth, hard. "Of the three Hegemons, he's the most shameless! He relies on his incredible mastery over spacetime to abduct some of the most powerful World-level cultivators of the Endless Territories. If it wasn't for the Twelve Palaces of Brightshore, the Brightshore Kingdom wouldn't have the status and standing it currently does."

Ning had to acknowledge this as being true. In terms of Daolords, the Twelve Palaces of Brightshore had far more members than the Brightshore Imperials. The Twelve Palaces often numbered one or more of the top three Daolords of each era within their ranks... and they even had Eternal Emperors! By comparison, the imperial clan was much weaker.

“It doesn’t matter. You remain a brother for life,” the Ninedust Sectlord declared. “And given my current level of power, I really don’t worry about those Brightshore Imperials at all. Don’t worry. I won’t make things difficult for you.”

Ning immediately let out a sigh of relief. If Ninedust ended up in a battle against the Brightshore Imperials, the lifeblood oath Ning had sworn would force him to protect the Brightshore imperials. Ninedust was making his position clear in order to avoid precisely this type of awkward situation. Indeed, given Ninedust’s standing at the very peak of power amongst Daolords, there really were few to no Brightshore Imperials who were a match for him, and not a single one who could truly threaten him.

Now that he was a Daolord of the Fourth Step, the Ninedust Sectlord’s ‘invulnerable aquaform’ was far more powerful than Kongsan’s ‘darkness incarnate’ form had been. In a normal battle, no Daolord was capable of annihilating him when he assumed that form. In truth, all of the most supreme Daolords had their own special talents, and all of them were generally quite hard to deal with. The only ones capable of threatening them were the most supreme of Heartforce Daolords, who were able to use techniques that struck at their very souls and truesouls. Those attacks still proved dangerous to them.

Daolord Featherdress had created the [Featherdress Soulthrall Song] and become acknowledged as the most powerful of Daolords. The other supreme Daolords were unwilling to fight against her precisely because of her heartforce abilities.

“Thank you, Ninedust,” Ning said gratefully.

“Cut that out. We are brothers!” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head and smiled. After having travelled with Ning for so long, he truly felt that Ning was a person worthy of being his lifelong friend. “Darknorth, you spoke of using the Brightshore Kingdom’s spacetime tunnels... given who I am, it probably wouldn’t be easy for me to enter them.”

“When we get there, I’ll have to trouble you to hide within one of my estate-world’s for a time,” Ning said.

“Alright.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. The two were very close to each other, and they both naturally swore lifeblood oaths after having decided to go to the Waveshift Realm together.

Even the best of friends would generally rely on lifeblood oaths to bind each other, as it was possible for even lifelong brothers to turn on each other for the sake of treasures involving the Daomerge. To avoid such disastrous outcomes, most would rely upon lifeblood oaths to keep everyone honest.

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As Ning and Ninedust were hastening to the Waveshift Realm, yet another danger befell Vastheaven Palace.

“Vastheaven Palace.” A white-robed elder had just arrived at the Vastheaven Everworld. He stood at the peak of a mountain, staring at the distant Vastheaven Palace.

“I hear that Vastheaven Palace has gained a Heartforce Cultivator.” A look of absolute self-confidence was in the white-robed elder’s eyes. Due to certain choices he had made in his path of cultivation, he didn’t fear Heartforce Cultivators at all. “My home was too far away from the Waveshift Realm! I’m definitely going to arrive much later than the other Daolords. If I can procure the information regarding the Waveshift Realm which Daolord Solesky has, I might be able to acquire one of those jade seals even though I’ll arrive later than the others.”

The white-robed elder strode forwards through the skies, each step causing ripples of light to spread out. Soon, he arrived in the skies above Vastheaven Palace.

“Darknorth. Solesky. Are you present?” the white-robed elder asked calmly. Rumble... his voice echoed within the skies around the area. A short while later, four figures flew out of Vastheaven Palace. It was Ji Ning, Daolord Solesky, Daolord Battlemaster, and Daolord Brightfish.

“All avatars.” The white-robed elder glanced at them, then shook his head and frowned. Avatars were disposable. Each one represented ten million cubes of chaos nectar and quite a bit of effort, but for the sake of

the Daomerge... even fairly poor Daolords like Solesky and Battlemaster would just grit their teeth and bear it.

“Him? The ‘Junior Radiant King’?” Daolord Solesky’s face turned white.

“It’s actually him?” The faces of Ning and the others turned pale as well.

Amongst the supreme Daolords of the Endless Territories, there was a particularly powerful Daolord who had been given the respectful title of the Radiant King. He was a terrifying Daolord who was ranked third in the Endless Territories. As for the ‘Junior Radiant King’, he belonged to the same race as the Radiant King but was slightly weaker, ranking amongst the second-tier Daolords. However, he stood at the very peak of power amongst the second-tier Daolords and was considerably stronger than Kongsan.

The two of them belonged to the same race and used similar techniques. The Junior Radiant King’s true Daoist title was actually Yanmi. He could thus be addressed as Daolord Yanmi, but most simply referred to him as the Junior Radiant King.

“I’m sure you know that my heart is like light itself. You will be unable to shake my heart unless your heartforce skills have reached a truly unfathomable peak,” the white-robed elder said calmly. “For me, wiping out Vastheaven Palace is a very easy task. Solesky, I imagine you know why I am here. Give me everything you know about the Waveshift Realm, or I will have no choice but to attack.”

Daolord Solesky had an ugly look on his face. Battlemaster and Brightfish were both anxious as well. They had guessed long ago that the power Ning had displayed was enough to scare off the vast majority of Daolords, but... this concerned the Voidsea Jadesesals! Perhaps the supreme Daolords who were completely confident in their abilities would head straight to the Waveshift Realm, but the ones who were slightly less confident would all come here to try their luck.

And indeed, it was a matter of trying their luck. Everyone knew that the chances of Solesky handing the information over was quite low... but for the sake of the Daomerge, they would still give it a try, no matter how low

their chances were.

“Hmph.” Seeing the looks on the faces of the four, the white-robed elder let out a cold snort. Whoosh! He suddenly seemed transformed into a dazzling sun that radiated eye-piercing radiance. His light stretched out into infinity as multiple clones of him seemed to appear. Countless clones of him quickly filled the skies, resulting in what seemed like trillions of white-robed elders appearing above and surrounding the four Vastheaven Daolords.

“If you don’t hand the information over, I’ll have no choice but to wipe you out and destroy Vastheaven Palace!” The trillions of white-robed old men all spoke out at the same time, their voices booming in the skies.

“Daolord Yanmi, if you wish to wipe out Vastheaven Palace, you need to ask me for permission first!” Ji Ning’s cold voice rang out in response.



## Chapter 22: A Clash

The countless white-robed elders standing in midair all turned to stare directly at Ji Ning.

“Daolord Darknorth?” The countless white-robed elders smirked. “I’ve heard long ago that the newest Daolord of Vastheaven Palace, Daolord Darknorth, is an incredible figure who is also a Heartforce Cultivator! Then... let me see just how much ability you have, Daolord Darknorth. I have countless clones right now. Are you able to find the real me?”

“Hmph.” Ning let out a cold snort. BOOM! The surrounding area of countless kilometers around him began to tremble and rumble as an enormous illusion of a world manifested above. This vast world had valleys, rivers, seas, mountains, and an extremely prominent and utterly enormous sword-shaped mountain at the very center of it. The enormous heartworld projection came crashing straight down!

The countless mountains in the surrounding area were instantly crushed into dust, almost as though an enormous hand had just slapped down upon them. The heartworld projection had descended!

The countless white-robed elders who had been glowing with light were also put under incredible pressure. Ning’s heartworld projection was on par with his nine novessence arts and possessed incredible power. One white-robed elder after another disappeared like popping bubbles, and soon a mere 529 white-robed elders remained in the skies.

“What?!” Looks of astonishment appeared simultaneously upon the faces of the remaining 529 elders. “What a powerful heartworld projection!”

The power of a heartworld projection was a testament to the power of a cultivator’s heartworld. The greater the heartworld, the stronger the projection. Ning’s powerful heartworld projection was incredible even amongst Heartforce Cultivators; he could be considered as having reached the second-tier!

“He’s actually managed to keep a few clones alive.” Ning swept the 529

white-robed elders with his gaze. “The Junior Radiant King lives up to his reputation.”

“If the Radiant King himself was present, you wouldn’t be able to wipe out a single one of his clones,” the many white-robed elders smirked.

“Perhaps.” As Ning’s words came out, his heartforce swept out yet again. It lashed out like a wave towards the hundreds of white-robed elders, only to discover that every single one of them stood in the path of this wave. Clearly, every single white-robed elder contained part of the old man’s soul and truesoul. Boom! Boom! Boom! Heartforce Eradicator! Ning’s heartforce crashed directly against the soul and truesoul of the white-robed elder.

“Impressive. However, you won’t be able to do anything to me. Prepare to receive my blow!” The many white-robed elders all waved their hands, causing a total of nine black swords to appear in the skies.

“Big brothers, stay far away from me,” Ning warned mentally.

“Understood. Be careful and don’t be reckless!” Daolords Solesky, Brightfish, and Battlemaster all quickly retreated.

All of them felt nervous. This was going to be a dangerous battle. If Ning’s true body was here, he would probably be able to win with ease, but he only had an avatar which had 70% of his true power... and most importantly of all, he didn’t have the Northbow swords! Ever since those swords had drained so much golden sand from the shattered core of that planet, they had evolved to reach a terrifying level of power.

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The white-robed elders all separated as the nine black swords appeared in the skies.

“Which one is the real one?” Ning was quite puzzled. Without question, the true body was amongst the 529 and was controlling those nine divine black swords.

“Unable to find my true body? Feeling a bit anxious? Haha, I’m able to maintain more than 500 clones, and you won’t know which one to attack.

That's why it is guaranteed that you will lose this fight." The hundreds of white-robed elders all laughed and then roared, "Kill!"

Instantly, the nine divine black swords in the skies transformed into nine dark streaks of light... or to be precise, they transformed into nine black strands of silk! They moved at incredible speeds, at least fifty-nine times the speed of light. And this was with them being pressured by the heartworld projection! Otherwise, they would strike even faster. According to the stories, the true Radiant King's flying speed alone had already surpassed the limit of a hundred times the speed of light. The Junior Radiant King was naturally somewhat inferior in comparison.

"I'm able to attack you, but you aren't able to attack me. You lost this battle before it ever began, haha..." The many white-robed elders all laughed loudly.

"Go." Ning stood there calmly despite facing the nine attacking black threads. Whoosh! Whoosh! Streams of sword-intent began to manifest in the area around him. All of them began to tangle together like a group of fish, instantly forming an enormous vortex-world of Yin and Yang. This enormous Yin-Yang world was centered around Ning, forcing any and all attacks to go through it first.

This was Ning's Yin-Yang Sword Domain! However, it was formed purely out of sword-intent and not his nine novessence arts, and so it only had 20% of the power of the original.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The nine black threads plunged directly into the Yin-Yang vortex-world. Although they once more slowed down, they still quickly reached Ning.

"Fuck off!" Ning let out a loud shout as he slapped out with both hands at once. KABOOM! His twin palms were like two enormous mountains slamming outwards as he manifested the Heavenbreaker sword-intent of his Omega Sword Dao. His two palms were indescribably large and filled with overbearing brute force, but also moved in a unpredictable and marvelous way. The Omega Sword Dao was a perfect whole, after all; none of its stances, not even a brute-force one like this, contained any 'stupid'

or 'clumsy' weaknesses. Not only was this attack ferocious, it was also unpredictable and marvelous. The nine black threads were unable to avoid it and so were forced to strike those two enormous palms head on.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! A series of explosions rang out as the nine black swords were all knocked flying backwards.

"What?!" The many clones of the Junior Radiant King all had looks of shock on their faces. "My nine swords are centered around the Dao of Light. They are incredibly fast and attacked from different directions... but none of them were able to avoid that attack?"

He could scarcely believe it. But of course, he had no idea that Ning's true skill lay in close combat, thanks to his Dao of the Sword! The Dao of the Sword was meant for combat, and Ning was the master of the Omega Sword Dao; he had no flaws at all in close combat. Forget about nine swords, even ninety-nine or more swords would be unable to penetrate his airtight defenses. Ning hadn't even had to use his defensive Soleheart stance in order to deal with those nine swords; he had fought them head-on! Clearly, they had posed no threat to him at all.

"Lightshadow!" A baleful look was in the Junior Radiant King's eyes. Instantly, the nine black swords in the skies transformed into a total of 320 black swords, every single one of which was able to endure the pressure of the heartworld projection and survive.

"His heartworld projection is incredibly strong. I'm normally able to manifest countless sword-shadows, making my enemies unable to tell which are real and which are fake, but his heartworld projection is making it so that I'm only able to manifest a bit over three hundred." The white-robed elders all stared intently at Ning. "Try this a second time!"

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! The 320 black swords transformed into black threads that once more shot towards Ning. This time, the old man spread them out even farther, making them attack Ning from every single direction, filling the area around Ning from head to toe with attacks.

Ning stood there in the air. Faced with this omnipresent attack, he simply waved his palms again. Those two enormous palms struck out like

two enormous wheels that merged together into a whole, defeating all of the attacking black swords and actually destroying a few of them.

This was his Omega Sword Dao – Yin-Yang! Although it was primarily a defensive stance, it did have some offensive power built into it.

“What!? He withstood it all?!” The many white-robed elders were all shocked and enraged. “Then I’ll have no choice but to use my forbidden arts to kill him.”

BOOM! The white-robed elder’s many clones all shone brightly. Countless streams of light mixed together, causing the entire Vastheaven Everworld to be illuminated by them! This light was so dazzling to behold that it truly did light up every single corner of this entire everworld! The weaker cultivators of the Vastheaven Everworld all raised their heads to stare at the light in the skies, puzzled.

“He’s going all-out.” Seeing this, Ning realized that the white-robed elder’s repeated failures had caused him to feel so anxious as to go all-out.

“Is he going to use the legendary [Lumislayers]?” This was Ning’s first guess. The legendary Radiant King was ranked third amongst the Daolords of the Endless Territories, while Palace Lord Dawnstar was ranked second. Both, however, were actually on par with each other in power. The Radiant King’s fame in the Endless Territories came from his three supreme killing techniques, and not even ordinary Eternal Emperors would dare receive these three blows head-on.

According to the information on the star map which the Brightshore Kingdom had given Ning, the Junior Radiant King, Daolord Yanmi, was able to use two of those killer attacks.

“My Omega Sword Dao is the perfect Dao for combat. I want to see just how powerful these so-called ‘killer attacks’ are!” Ning felt complete confidence in himself and his chances, but the distant Daolords Solesky, Battlemaster, and Brightfish were all filled with worry as they watched from afar.

# Chapter 23: The Radiant King's Three Killer Attacks

The many clones of the Junior Radiant King, Daolord Yanmi, all glowed with dazzling light that illuminated the entire Vastheaven Everworld. All of them shouted out in unison: "DESTROY!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! All of the light that had been illuminating the Vastheaven Everworld gathered together to form nine pillars of radiance! The nine pillars of light each contained a sword in the center, and they shot towards Ji Ning with terrifying and destructive power. These nine light pillars didn't really have anything mysterious or profound to them; what they had was frontal, overwhelming, crushing power! They were so powerful that the three Vastheaven Daolords watching in the distance all turned pale.

"Just what I wanted." Ning laughed loudly as he once more struck out with his palms. Whoosh! This time, an enormous black hole appeared in the area around Ning that swallowed up everything in its path.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! A series of muffled, heavy collisions could be heard, but the black hole around Ning didn't dissipate in the slightest. "Hah! Is that all you have?" Ning's loud laughter rang out throughout the world around them.

"What?!" Daolord Yanmi was shocked. "Impossible. How could he have endured my attack that easily? Even if his avatar is comparable to top-grade Eternal treasures, he should've been blown backwards and been completely unable to resist the power of my attack!" His plan had been to knock Ning off his feet, then use his light to bind and tie down Ning during Ning's moment of helplessness.

But... Ning had actually taken his blow head-on?!

"How can his avatar be as powerful as this? If his true body was here, would he be crushing me instead of vice-versa?" Daolord Yanmi could hardly believe it. "This was one of the three killer attacks created by the

Radiant King, the [Lumislayer]. Although this is the weakest of the three attacks, this result is still...”

All of the light vanished, and Ning’s true body appeared once more. He stared at Daolord Yanmi, then shook his head. “Daolord Yanmi, you truly have disappointed me. So this is the first of the three legendary killer attacks of the Radiant King? If the Radiant King himself used this [Lumislayer], not even Eternal Emperors would dare to receive it head-on. But you... you are lacking by far.” Ning’s Omega Sword Dao had reached the ultimate apex in both offense and defense. The only way to breach his defense would be through an overwhelming disparity in power. Clearly, although his avatar only had 70% of his true body’s power, it was still roughly on par with Daolord Yanmi.

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“He blocked it.” Daolord Solesky let out a sigh of relief.

“Darknorth’s Sword Dao truly is on par with his heartforce. He was actually able to endure the [Lumislayer] with ease.” Daolord Brightfish sighed in amazement. “He truly is incredible.”

“But the situation is still quite unfavorable for him.” Daolord Battlemaster frowned. “The Junior Radiant King has manifested over five hundred clones. Darknorth can do nothing but passively accept the man’s attacks. There’s no way for him to counter-attack at all. None of his counter-attacks would land on the Junior Radiant King’s true body.”

Daolord Solesky nodded somberly as well. “Yes. This is going to be a passive, one-sided battle. If he can’t hit back, it won’t be easy to win.”

“According to what I’ve heard, the Junior Radiant King is able to use only the first two killer attacks of the three.” Daolord Brightfish said anxiously, “In comparison, the [Lumislayer] is actually the weakest of the three attacks. Next is the [Lumihilator], with the strongest being the legendary [Lumipocalypse].”

Slay.

Annihilate.

Apocalypse.

These were the three legendary killer attacks. According to the legends, the [Lumipocalypse] was created and practiced by the Radiant King alone. It was this technique which allowed him to be recognized and acknowledged as the third most powerful Daolord of all the Endless Territories. However, the principle of this attack was to first injure the self, then injure the foe!

Ordinary Eternal Emperors would probably be slain in a single blow by this attack. One could imagine how strong it was! Given that even the Radiant King himself would be injured when using this attack, there was no way the Junior Radiant King 'Daolord Yanmi' was qualified to use it.

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"Is that so?" Daolord Yanmi had an ugly look on his face, and he was verily brimming with murderous intent.

"I hear that you can use two of the three killer attacks of the Radiant King. I wonder how strong the second attack is?" Ning's eyes gleamed with excitement. He wanted to see just how strong the so-called [Lumihilator] was and how it measured up to his own attacks, such as the Blood Drop stance and the Shadowless stance! The Radiant King himself normally just used the [Lumihilator] in combat, as the third killer attack would cause him severe injuries. Thus, he wouldn't use it without a very good reason.

"Then have a taste of annihilation for yourself." Daolord Yanmi's hundreds of clones suddenly all vanished into thin air. Whoosh. They dispersed into motes of light that reformed into a single Daolord Yanmi.

Ning narrowed his eyes.

"I'm fairly weak," Daolord Yanmi said in a soft voice. "Thus, I'm unable to maintain my clones while using the [Lumihilator]. The Radiant King, however, is able to launch this attack with all of his clones at once, making it impossible to tell which is real and which is false. That is true power! However... against you, my strength is enough."

Ning immediately grew vigilant. Daolord Yanmi was down to just a



single body now, and it didn't seem all that powerful... and it was precisely the fact that he had reserved all of his power that Ning felt all the more vigilant.

Daolord Yanmi produced a single black sword in his hand. "Annihilate," he murmured softly. Swoosh! His entire body seemed to merge together with that sword and transform into a dazzling strand of golden light. Even though he was under the pressure of the heartworld projection and the Yin-Yang Sword Domain, he still moved at seventy-two times the speed of light.

"What terrifying speed." Ning was stunned. He himself was far slower than his opponent. "However... you wish to fight me in close combat? Hmph. Close combat isn't all about speed." Faced with the attacking strand of golden light, Ning struck out with both hands, forming sword-fingers with them to block.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

The power of this strand of golden light came from pure speed. Just as it started to clash against Ning's fingers and be blocked by them, it instantly changed directions. The strand of golden light continuously circled around Ning, moving at terrifying speeds as it attacked him again and again, almost as if it was bouncing between multiple mirrors. Ning was forced to rely on his Omega Sword Dao – Soleheart stance and pour all of his efforts in to defense.

"How is this possible?! How could his defenses be completely flawless? How can his avatar keep up with my speed?!" Daolord Yanmi was stunned even as he executed this killer attack.

The [Lumihilator] could be described by one word – fast! It vastly surpassed all other techniques in this area, and it was able to continuously change directions. Generally speaking, experts on the same level as the wielder would at most be able to block three or four times before they were no longer able to handle the changes in direction and were defeated! To date, when fighting opponents on the same level, Daolord Yanmi had only ever seen opponents rely on special techniques such as 'invulnerable

bodies' to endure this attack. In all his life, he had only encountered two figures who were able to actually use their weapons to block this attack... with Ning being the second of the two!

The first was the legendary number one expert of the entire Endless Territories. But of course, back then the man had merely been a Daolord of the Third Step.

“He really is quite fast. Incredibly fast, in fact, and the changes in direction are fast as well. This single attack is virtually all-encompassing and omnipresent. Its speed and agility alone allows the wielder to dominate much of the Endless Territories and defeat the vast majority of Daolords. However, its actual close-combat techniques are fairly weak. Its defenses are quite weak, and its attacks are excessively fixed and not sufficiently unpredictable. I’m able to easily tell where the next attack will be coming from.” This was Ning’s private evaluation. “Anyone faster than him would be able to defeat this attack with ease.”

However, Ning also knew that this current level of speed was in spite of his heartworld projection and his Yin-Yang Sword Domain. Even the most supreme of Daolords like Ninedust would generally be unable to keep up with these attacks. As for the Radiant King, he himself was already able to move at a hundred times the speed of light. One could imagine how fast his [Lumihilate] would be!

“Failed. Failed. Failed again...” Daolord Yanmi was increasingly anxious. He had launched more than a thousand attacks in an incredibly short period of time, but all of them had been blocked by Ning. Ning was clearly much slower than him, but Ning’s defenses were so airtight, flawless, and perfect that he wasn’t able to find a single opening at all.

“I’ve tested out both of your killer attacks, and they seem quite so-so. Time for my counter-attack!” Ning’s heartforce instantly surged out, silently and soundless infiltrating Daolord Yanmi’s body.

At present, Ning had two incredibly powerful heartforce attacks! This was his second one – the [Dreamstar]! The [Heartforce Eradicator] focused on a head-on clash, while the [Dreamstar] focused on illusions!

“Eh?” Daolord Yanmi had been focused on this furious battle, but he suddenly sensed his soul and truesoul being entranced. Illusions began to appear in front of him, but he instantly brought himself back into wakefulness as his mind let out a furious shout, destroying the illusions before him.

BOOM!

However, right at this moment... Ning’s right hand pierced directly through his chest!

“You...” Daolord Yanmi was stunned. He realized that in the end, the illusions had disrupted his concentration after all, albeit for just a brief instant... but he had slowed down during that instant, allowing Ning to seize the opportunity to strike him.

“What’s going on?” Ning was surprised as well. “He should have an Eternal armor protecting his body. Why was I able to so easily pierce into his chest?”

“Daolord Darknorth, you are very powerful. Your close combat skills are just as strong as your heartforce skills.” Daolord Yanmi ignored the heavy injure as he stared at Ning, then sighed. “I imagine it will be difficult to find anyone on our level of power who is capable of defeating you. Most likely, only the most supreme of first-tier Daolords would be able to beat you. You’ve beaten me, and I have no excuses to make.”

Whoosh. Daolord Yanmi’s body instantly dissipated into countless streams of radiant light. The light quickly reassembled into a second Daolord Yanmi off in the distance. He stared at Ning, then smiled. “This is what the true secrets of having a body of light incarnate are all about. Not only can my body transform into countless clones, I’m also virtually invulnerable! Although you are a bit stronger than me, you aren’t able to kill me. Alas... I had been hoping to find a chance to improve my odds, but I ended up running into someone like you. It seems my chances of acquiring the Voidsea Jadeseals really are slim.”

After speaking, he turned and took a single step forwards, then vanished without a trace.

Ning continued to stare in the direction Daolord Yanmi had disappeared into. He murmured softly, "A body of light incarnate?" All second-tier Daolords had extremely strong life-preserving abilities. Kongsan, for example, was nigh-invulnerable thanks to his 'darkness incarnate' body. Daolord Yanmi's life-preserving ability was just as strong as Kongsan's had been. Beating him wouldn't be difficult, but actually killing him would be very difficult.

And similarly, killing Ji Ning would also be extremely difficult.

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Within the Waveshift Realm.

A white-robed youth whose long golden hair glimmered with radiance was strolling slowly through the realm. The youth was quite handsome, and none of the other cultivators dared to even look him directly in the eye.

He was the Radiant King, one of the truly supreme Daolords of the Endless Territories, ranked at the very top of the listings.

"I told him long ago. Daolord Solesky would merely leave his avatar at Vastheaven Palace, with all the other disciples having fled long ago. Clearly, Daolord Solesky has already decided to let his avatar perish in battle if need be." The Radiant King shook his head. "Yanmi and the others, however, still harbored their foolish illusions and hoped to gain some intelligence."

"To Solesky, that information represents his chances of succeeding in the Daomerge. How could he possibly be willing to tell others about it? Only those weak Daolords would harbor any illusions that they would win the information from him. All of the truly powerful Daolords chose to waste no time in heading straight to the Waveshift Realm. Every single moment might give them an advantage in acquiring the Voidsea Jadeseals." A hint of a smile was on the Radiant King's face.

# Chapter 24: Entering the Waveshift Realm

The three spacetime tunnels of the Brightshore Kingdom were used quite frequently in recent days, because quite a few wandering Verge-level Daolords had hastened back and traversed them enroute to the Badlands Territory.

Whoosh. A white-robed youth emerged from the dark vortex exiting one of the tunnels.

“Daolord Darknorth.” Suddenly, a voice called out to him. Ji Ning turned his head, only to see a smiling, golden-robed elder beam at him. “Daolord Darknorth!”

“Daolord Goldsaber?” Ning recognized the old man.

“That I am. I feel quite embarrassed when I look at you. It took this old man years to reach the Verge as a Daolord. Just a short while ago, you were a World-level cultivator, but now you are more powerful than me! I heard that even the Junior Radiant King, Daolord Yanmi, was unable to defeat your avatar. Impressive, truly impressive,” the golden-robed elder sighed.

Word of the battle between Ning’s avatar and Daolord Yanmi had indeed spread throughout the Endless Territories. In truth, Solesky and Battlemaster had done this on purpose, so as to ensure that the other Daolords would give up their fantasies and withdraw.

“I’ve heard some important information that I’m not sure if you are aware of, Daolord Darknorth,” the golden-robed elder said.

“What is it?” Ning asked.

“Just a few hours ago, Winesage of the Dark Kingdom has appeared in the Badlands Territory. By now, he’s already entered the Waveshift Realm!” the golden-robed expert said solemnly.

“Winesage?” Ning’s face turned slightly pale. Winesage of the Dark Kingdom? He was one of the legends of the entire universe, because he was now publicly acclaimed as the number one Daolord of all the Endless

Territories! It was actually something of a joke; the most powerful Daolord of the noble Endless Territories actually stemmed from the outsider organization known as the Dark Kingdom. Alas, no one could deny how terrifyingly strong Winesage was.

Anyone in any era who was publicly acknowledged as being number one possessed truly incredible power. Daolord Featherdress herself had been the number one Daolord of her era.

Winesage was supposedly skilled in the Dao of Darkness... and he was also a Heartforce Cultivator! The legends said that as a child, he was born into and grew up within a world of slaughter. The Dark Kingdom was an outsider organization, making it very difficult for them to truly establish themselves in the Endless Territories. Thus, all of the geniuses who grew up within the Dark Kingdom were extremely violent and brutal, with the Dao Alliance not intervening at all! It was hard to imagine the difficulties and torments which Winesage experienced.

As a result, he became a notorious alcoholic, using alcohol to douse away his worries... but in one alcohol-induced dream, he suddenly came to master an incredible heartforce art known as the [Slaughterfiend Field]!

“It was only expected that Winesage would go to the Waveshift Realm.” Ning was quite calm. “Now that the Voidsea Jade seals have emerged, I imagine that most of the most powerful Daolords will all go there. Given Winesage’s power, how could he not?”

“That’s not the only thing I have to share,” the golden-robed elder said. “Winesage actually acquired a Universe treasure!”

“What?!” Ning called out in astonishment, “A UNIVERSE treasure?! Are you sure about that?”

“Dead sure. Brother Darknorth, I heard this just a short while ago myself. I imagine that you’ll receive word soon as well,” the golden-robed elder said. “The Waveshift Realm is in a state of chaos right now, and many of the Daolords who aren’t confident in their chances have begun to gather together into groups. More than ten thousand Daolords of the Dao Alliance joined forces to set up a grand formation outside the Waveshift

Realm to prevent the Aeonians and the Daolords of the Dark Kingdom to enter the realm! And indeed, they were able to stop the Daolords of both organizations for a time. However, when Winesage appeared and was faced with the grand formation set up by over ten thousand Daolords of the Dao Alliance, he ended up using his Universe treasure and forced a way into the Waveshift Realm!”

“A Universe treasure?” Ning still couldn’t believe it. He had run into several Universe treasures by now. The first one had been the shattered sword in the Sword Palace, while the second had been the indigo greatsword of the Sword Hegemon in the Genesis Lands of the alternate universe. The third had been within that cave deep inside the Terror Starsea, the longstaff that had been left behind by that ancestor of the Ancient cultivators.

None of them, however, had taken a liking to Ning! There was no way to bind Universe treasures by force. This was a case of the weapon choosing the wielder, rather than the wielder choosing the weapon! Every single Universe treasure contained a truly inconceivable amount of power.

“He was already the number one Daolord of the Endless Territories. If he has a Universe treasure, he’s going to be absolutely unstoppable.” The golden-robed elder sighed. “And... to me, it’s inconceivable that a Universe treasure would ever choose a Daolord. When Daolords fail their Daomerge, death is a certainty. Based on what I know, Winesage has already been alive for an extremely long period of time. I imagine he only has a few thousand chaos cycles left before he reaches the limits of his lifespan.”

Ning nodded. Generally speaking, Universe treasures would only choose Eternal Emperors! The number of Daolords in the Endless Territories who had acquired Universe treasures could be counted on one hand.

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth, are you planning to go to the Waveshift Realm as well?” the golden-robed elder asked.

“Yes.” Ning nodded.

“Would you like to travel with me?” the golden-robed elder immediately

asked.

“No need. I’ve already made an appointment with a friend,” Ning explained.

“Then I won’t force it.” The golden-robed expert knew that he was much weaker than Ning and would just slow the latter down. “Although my chances are slim, I’m still going to go to the Waveshift Realm. If I go, I’ll at least have a slim chance. Haha! However, I’m definitely going to work together alongside a group of other Daolords. We’re not like those supreme Daolords who dare to travel solo or in small groups.”

Ning couldn’t help but sigh. For the sake of the Daomerge, even the weaker Daolords were still willing to risk it all.

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Word quickly spread like wildfire throughout the Endless Territories, stunning everyone.

“Winesage? What an interesting kid.” The Netherlily Hegemon of the Ancient cultivators smiled with praise.

“Every member of the Dark Kingdom is a madman. They are crazy towards themselves and even crazier towards their descendants. Still, they ended up rearing a fine young fellow.” The Windrain Hegemon was perpetually in a state of slumber, but he had woken up due to this business with the Voidsea Jadeseals.

“Darknorth and Bertulu are both Heartforce Cultivators as well. I had thought that they would have a shot at overtaking Winesage once they became Daolords of the Fourth Step, but it seems that hope is gone.” The almighty Brightshore Hegemon shook his head. “Their only chance lies in acquiring a Universe treasure of their own... but that chance is far too slim.”

It wasn’t that the Brightshore Hegemon underestimated Ning and Bertulu. Rather, it was that Universe treasures simply contributed an overwhelming amount of power to their wielders.

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Within Vastheaven Palace. Ning's avatar and Solesky's avatar were holding a meeting.

"Darknorth, are you sure about entering the Waveshift Realm?" Daolord Solesky asked.

"I'll get there in a few years," Ning said. "If I miss this opportunity, a second one like it may never come again. Of course I have to go in! I have a friend as well who is a member of the Ancient cultivators and who is even stronger than I am."

"Mm." Solesky nodded and said heavily, "If you are going to go inside, take this." As he spoke, he handed over a jade slip.

"This..." As soon as Ning saw the jade slip, he had an idea as to what it was.

"This is everything which I know regarding the Waveshift Realm," Daolord Solesky said seriously.

"I can't accept this." Ning hesitated. This would give him a faster starting point and let him maintain a lead over his opponents. Daolord Solesky had entered much earlier than the other supreme Daolords had, and he had Daolord Badlands' incarnation assisting him. Given Badlands' mastery over Numerancy, the two had no doubt learned a great deal regarding the Waveshift Realm. This information truly would be priceless.

"Two years ago, Badlands and I encountered King Gorsch." Daolord Solesky said softly, "Fortunately, Badlands managed to take advantage of some of the formations and barriers within the Waveshift Realm itself to trick King Gorsch, allowing us a narrow escape."

"The Waveshift Realm is now filled with many dangers. Even though I have Badlands helping out, I'm not sure that I can avoid all these dangers," Daolord Solesky said. "However... you must remember that no one else besides you is permitted to read this. You aren't allowed to tell a second person about this. We're brothers, you and I... but I don't owe anyone else this."

"Understood." Ning nodded.

“After you go inside, be careful. From what I’ve heard, the top ten Daolords of the Endless Territories have all gone inside! There are also some low-key, little-known Daolords who are just as powerful as them who have also gone inside,” Solesky instructed.

“You need to be careful as well, big brother. I’ll try to join up with you as soon as I can,” Ning said.

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After leaving the Terror Starsea, Ning had relied on his dimension-transcending abilities and the Brightshore Kingdom’s spacetime tunnel to hasten towards the Badlands Territory. Despite that, it still took him 112 years before arriving.

Two figures emerged from a dimensional tunnel to appear in the void above the Badlands Everworld.

“Brother Ninedust, you can go to the Waveshift Realm first. I’ll meet up with you in an hour,” Ning said.

“Is there something you need to do?” the Ninedust Sectlord asked.

“I need to make a few arrangements.” Ning didn’t explain.

“Got it. I’ll wait for you, but hurry up. Don’t dawdle! We’re already years behind most of the other Daolords,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

Ning nodded, then opened up yet another dimensional tunnel.

Ning was heading to the Three Realms. The Three Realms was separated from the Badlands Territory by layers of dangers; ordinary teleportation methods were useless against these regions! However, Ning’s ability to transcend space allowed him to move directly to the Three Realms. He was going to place his most important Dao-cultivating treasure, the Stone Censer of Reunion, within the Three Realms alongside his Primaltwin.

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The skies outside above the Waveshift Realm. Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord had gathered together here.

“So many people.” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stared at the vast,

seemingly endless cloud-shrouded realm that lay before them. This was the Waveshift Realm... and an endless cluster of figures could be seen outside of it. Daolords, tens of thousands of Daolords! They had set up an absolutely enormous formation which covered the entire Waveshift Realm.

“I heard that Winesage was able to break through this formation and force his way inside. Quite a few of the Daolords of the Dark Kingdom and the Aeonians managed to charge inside alongside him.” The Ninedust Sectlord sighed. “Just looking at the formation, I can tell that I’m far from being a match for Winesage.”

“No confidence in yourself?” Ning smirked.

“Plenty of confidence. The Voidsea Jade seals aren’t necessarily going to be won by the strongest,” the Ninedust Sectlord quickly said.

“Then cut the crap. Let’s go on in!” Ning urged.

“Let’s go.” The two transformed into streaks of light that flew straight towards the realm before them.

“That’s Daolord Darknorth.”

“Oh, Daolord Darknorth of our Dao Alliance?” The ten thousand-plus weak Daolords who were part of the grand formation didn’t move to stop Ning or the Ninedust Sectlord.

The Aeonians and the members of the Dark Kingdom would all be stopped, but all others were granted entry.

“Hurry up and let’m inside.”

“Daolord Darknorth seems quite confident. He actually dares to go inside with just one other Daolord partner.”

“Daolord Darknorth’s avatar alone is stronger than Yanmi. How strong must his true body be?” The other Daolords all chatted amongst themselves.

Ning and Ninedust... the two were significantly less well-known than the likes of Fiendqueen Dustrain, Winesage, Palace Lord Dawnstar, or the

Radiant King. However, when they joined together they were definitely on par with the most elite of Daolords. There were actually quite a few who were like Ning and Ninedust, both incredibly powerful and comparatively low-key.

“I’m more powerful than you, but as of right now you seem to be more famous than me. That kinda pisses me off.” The Ninedust Sectlord sent Ning a disgruntled mental complaint as they flew forwards together.

“That’s because you’ve been too low-key,” Ning sent mentally.

“Yes, yes I have.” The Ninedust Sectlord agreed. “Now that I’ve become a Daolord of the Fourth Step, I need to find a suitable opportunity to spread my name throughout the Endless Territories. Hell, I should at least rank in the top ten in the Endless Territories.”

“You’ll have plenty of opportunities in the Waveshift Realm. All you need to do is just pick one of the other top ten and beat them, and you’ll instantly rise to fame,” Ning said with a laugh.

Watched by over ten thousand Daolords, the two flew through the formation and advanced into the Waveshift Realm, shoulder-by-shoulder.

# Credits

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